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From the Mysteries of the Universe to the Mysteries of the Univers-ity: An Oral History with UC Santa Cruz Chancellor George Blumenthal

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From the Mysteries of the Universe to the Mysteries of the Univers-ity:

An Oral History with

UC Santa Cruz Chancellor George Blumenthal

Interviewed and Edited by Irene Reti

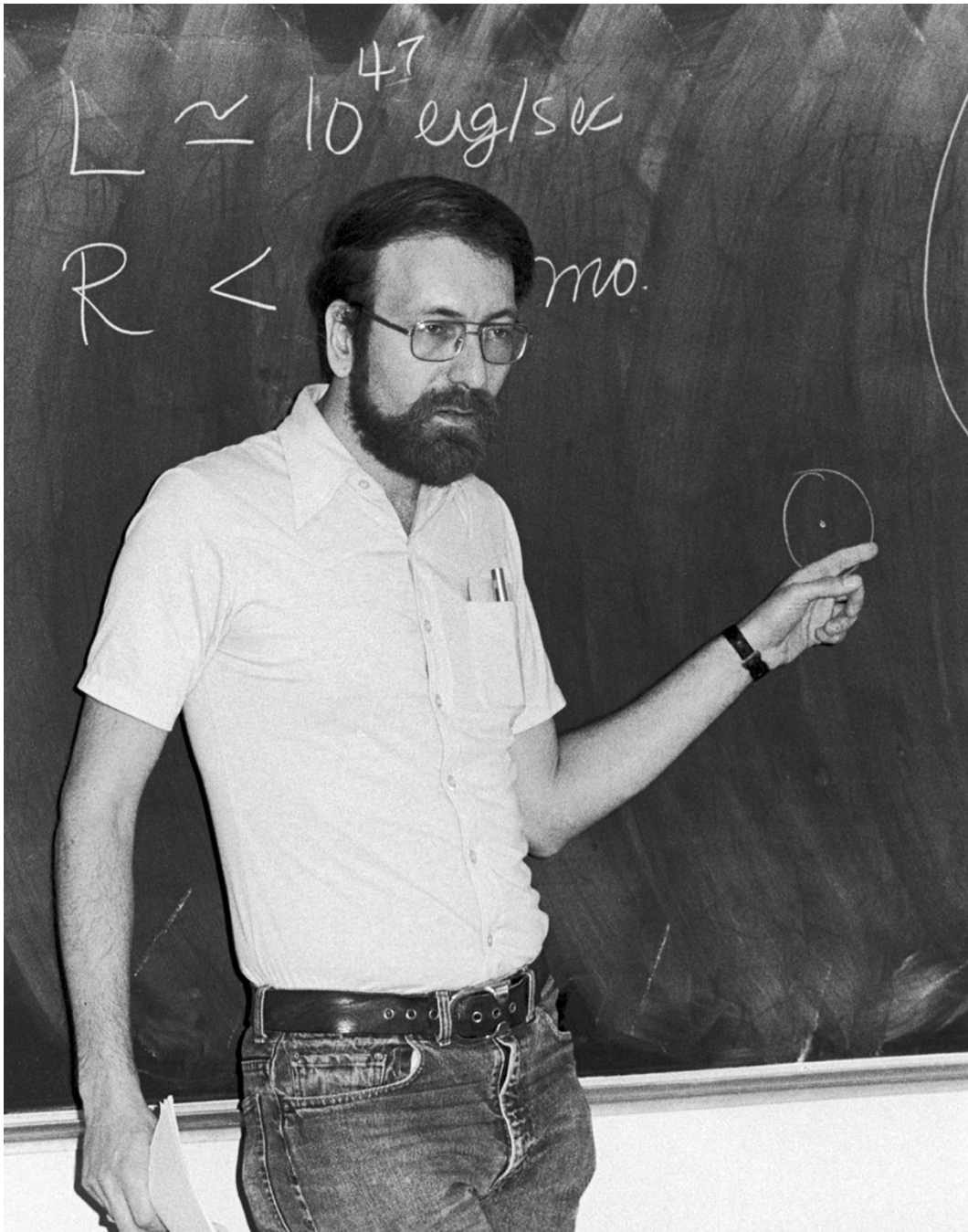
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2021



Chancellor George Blumenthal



Professor George Blumenthal, 1973

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Introduction

George R. Blumenthal arrived at UC Santa Cruz in 1972 as a young faculty member in astronomy and astrophysics. Thirty-five years later, on September 19, 2007, he became UCSC's tenth chancellor, after serving as acting chancellor for fourteen months. Blumenthal dedicated thirteen years of his life to being chancellor of UC Santa Cruz. This oral history was transcribed from forty interviews recorded between June 2018 and July 2019 and encompasses Chancellor Blumenthal's long and distinguished career at UC Santa Cruz and with the University of California system.

Blumenthal makes an ideal oral history narrator. He is a consummate and engaging storyteller with a phenomenal memory; he is also deeply reflective and thoughtful. Long before he became chancellor, Blumenthal served the campus in diverse capacities; he was the faculty representative to the UC Regents (2003-05); chaired the UC Santa Cruz division of the Academic Senate (2001-03); and served as chair of the Astronomy and Astrophysics Department twice.

But not only does this oral history cover almost fifty years of UCSC's history—from the early years of Oakes College under Provost J. Herman Blake, to the impacts of the defunding of public higher education in more recent years—it is also infused with Blumenthal's insider's viewpoint on the University of California system that he gained as vice-chair of the UC Academic Senate (2003-2004); chair of UC Academic Senate (2004-05); and experience serving on many other UC-wide committees and endeavors. In 2010, Blumenthal received the Oliver Johnson Award for Distinguished Leadership in the Academic Senate, the top UC honor for service at both the systemwide and campus levels.

This volume is thus both an oral history of UC Santa Cruz and of the University of California system as a whole and is an invaluable primary resource for those seeking to understand the history of both this unique campus in the redwoods and the intricate political history of the University of California system.

Between November 1967 and April of 1969, the founding director of the Regional History Project Elizabeth Calciano conducted a series of eighteen oral history interviews with founding Chancellor Dean McHenry. The three-volume, nearly 1400-page oral history that was published between 1972 and 1987 is in many ways an excellent bookend to this Blumenthal oral history; read together these oral histories offer profound longitudinal insight into the singular history of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

George Blumenthal was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1945, of working-class Jewish parents, Lilian and Marcel Blumenthal, who ran a Venetian blinds business. George worked in the family business throughout his childhood, developing the strong work ethic that has propelled his accomplished career. “I could put together and take apart a Venetian blind like you couldn’t believe, when I was like five years old,” George told me in our very first session. His interest in science began as an eleven-year old-boy, when he watched the launch of Sputnik in wonder, as well as many of the other space launches. He remembers “going out into my parents’ backyard at dusk and looking up and watching the [Echo 1 communications] satellite crossing the sky.” In high school, he began to excel in math and science, achieving one of the top scores on a statewide chemistry exam in the state of Wisconsin.

But the young George Blumenthal was a first-generation college student whose parents could not really guide him toward a career. He “only applied to one college”: the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. He remembered, “It was a legitimate enough place. I was so ignorant. I wasn’t aware that I could apply for scholarships elsewhere. Probably had I known that, I would have. I would have loved to get out of Milwaukee but it never crossed my mind that there was a practical way to do it. I was so naïve, I thought the only scholarships to college were football scholarships.” George later carried this experiential understanding of first-generation college students to his leadership in the University of California system.

While still an undergraduate at UW Milwaukee, George co-authored and published a scientific paper on sun pillars with his mentor Bob Greenler. After earning his B.S in physics, George was awarded a graduate scholarship in physics at UC San Diego, where he arrived in the very early years of that campus, immersing himself in his academic studies, first in particle physics and later in astrophysics. When not studying, he became an activist in the movement against the War in Vietnam and other political causes of the 1960s.

After earning his PhD in physics from UC San Diego in 1971, Blumenthal briefly held a postdoc at American Science and Engineering in Boston (AS&E), working on solar physics and x-ray science research. After about a year, he left that job to accept a faculty position in astronomy and astrophysics at the University of California, Santa Cruz, a campus that was then only seven years old. He was recruited to UCSC by his former faculty mentor at UC San Diego, Bill Mathews, who had left UCSD to take a position in astronomy and astrophysics at UC Santa Cruz. This portion of Blumenthal's oral history describes his impressions of UCSC in the early 1970s, its experimental college system and the dual college-board appointments that sometimes put pressures on young faculty. Blumenthal also devotes considerable attention to his memories of Oakes College and Provost J. Herman Blake and the political climate in the community of Santa Cruz during that period. He reflects on key campus figures such as Chancellor Dean McHenry, founding Cowell College Provost Page Smith, Chancellor Mark Christensen, and Chancellor Angus Taylor.

As the interviews progressed, we dove into discussing UCSC's enrollment crisis of the 1970s; Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer's reorganization of the college system in the late 1970s and 1980s; and later the administrations of Chancellor Robert Stevens, Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood, and Chancellor Denice Denton. On the UC systemwide level, George shared his impressions of UC Presidents Saxon, Gardner, and Napolitano. We also delved

into the ongoing controversies regarding UCSC's growth, covering the 2005 Long Range Development Plan; the political firestorm over the proposed Student Housing West project to be sited in UCSC's Great Meadow; the growth of the Silicon Valley Campus; and the Coastal Campus. We dipped into the budget crisis over Shakespeare Santa Cruz and the complexities of numerous student protests over the years. We wrapped up with George's thoughts about the impact of the Trump administration on the UCSC campus and on public higher education in general.

In another vein, this oral history is also a significant contribution to the history of astronomy and physics in the 20th century. As a renowned theoretical astrophysicist, Blumenthal has made groundbreaking breakthroughs in the understanding of the origin of structure in the universe, including galaxies and clusters of galaxies, and to the role that dark matter plays in the formation and evolution of this structure. He is a co-author of two textbooks, *21st Century Astronomy* and *Understanding Our Universe* and over seventy-five scientific papers. Blumenthal is a gifted science teacher and communicator; this oral history contains several sections in which he deftly explains his research on dark matter, his work on these two astronomy textbooks and other topics, in an accessible and engaging fashion. Blumenthal also discusses his tenure as vice chair of the California Association for Research in Astronomy, which oversees the W. M. Keck Observatory on the summit of Mauna Kea, Hawaii. He shares his personal recollections of his many scholarly colleagues in the astronomy and physics communities.

In many of these sessions, George refers, with deep respect and affection, to his wife Kelly Weisberg, who is a professor of law at UC Hastings and a recognized scholar and writer in the fields of family law, domestic violence, children and the law, and feminist legal theory.¹ Weisberg, who was both dedicated to the UC Santa Cruz campus and also to a distinguished academic career of her own, represents a more feminist model for the spouse of a chancellor than had been possible for chancellor's wives in earlier years of the

campus, who were expected to mostly fill a social role. Karen Sinsheimer, wife of Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer, spoke eloquently about this in her oral history.² For example, Weisberg founded and directed the 3+3 Program between UC Hastings and UC Santa Cruz from 2015-2020, which offered an accelerated path to a Bachelor's degree and Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree.

Oral history is a co-creation of the narrator and interviewer. George Blumenthal was one of the most collaborative narrators I have ever worked with in my more than thirty years as an oral historian with the Regional History Project. I prepared an initial outline of topics for our oral histories, based on archival research. He expanded that initial outline, and spent time preparing for each session by generating topics and notes for each session, writing notes on his huge iPad with a special electronic pen, and then emailing me a revised PDF before our next session. From just a few handwritten notes, he was able to reconstruct detailed stories, speaking extemporaneously and vividly about events that had unfolded decades ago. He made time for our sessions even in the midst of a busy final year as chancellor and was always gracious and engaged in the oral history adventure. As a current mid-level UCSC staff member, I was, at first, a bit intimidated about interviewing a sitting chancellor. But George looked me in the eyes on the first very day and said, "Call me George." He invited me to ask him anything and to make sure to let him know if I had any criticisms or concerns about what we were covering in the oral history, or the process itself.

I myself have spent more than forty years at UC Santa Cruz, arriving as a seventeen-year-old undergraduate student in environmental studies in 1978, only six years after George was hired as a young faculty member. After graduating in 1982, I came back to UCSC as a writing tutor in 1984, did a brief stint as an editor at the Office of the Registrar, and then joined the Regional History Project in 1989. George and I both know the singular history of UCSC firsthand, and I believe my institutional knowledge helped build rapport

between us and aided me in devising a structure to guide him through the various periods of the campus's history.

The period in which this oral history was conducted also coincided with my involvement in another ambitious and enormous project—the editing and publication of *Seeds of Something Different: An Oral History of the University of California, Santa Cruz*.³ While I began this project in 2015, much of the shaping and final editing and production on this 925-page, two-volume book took place in 2018-2019, as my interviews with George were transpiring. Over lunch, after the recorder was turned off, George and I often discussed *Seeds* and he became an unofficial advisor for the project, even humorously suggesting that we put a large slug on the cover somewhere, a suggestion we eventually adopted by including a photograph of a slug weathervane on the back cover. In addition, George generously agreed to review and edit a selection of excerpts from his oral history to be included in *Seeds*, so that his recollections could become part of the book. I cannot now imagine *Seeds* without George's cogent, compelling stories and I thank him for the extra time he devoted to this editing. In addition, he served as one of twelve commentators for a summer reading series based on *Seeds*, bringing his insightful remarks to a session entitled "Rocks Ahead": Reorganization of the College System (1980s).⁴

George's executive assistant, Margaret McGuire, often brought us scrumptious hot lunches—Thai food was George's favorite—and plied me with flavored coffees and baked treats. I want to thank Margaret, not only for the treats and warm hospitality, but also for her intrepid work and good cheer in finding time in George's busy schedule to make time to schedule what became an extraordinary number of sessions together. The last few interviews took place after George had retired and kept his own schedule.

All of Regional History's narrators are given the opportunity to review their transcripts before publication. Reviewing 1800 pages of transcript is a daunting task;

George approached this endeavor with his classic fortitude and discipline. He sent me biweekly dispatches of edited transcript during 2020, during which we were both working at home to shelter in place from the COVID-19 pandemic. We met on Zoom several times to discuss the editing process. The campus was closed and we mourned the loss of sitting across from each other with cups of tea and plates of cookies.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCSC campus, the UC system, the state, and indeed the entire world is now facing a catastrophe that may severely impact the budget for public higher education, and accelerate online learning, a topic which is only lightly touched on in this oral history. For the past year, most of UCSC's learning has been online. While students will return to the UCSC campus for in-person learning this fall of 2021, it is clear that the pandemic has transformed the landscape of higher education. What is now being called into question is the very future of the residential college campus. Editing this transcript during *Pandemic Times* felt a bit like taking a nostalgic time machine trip back to a happier and perhaps more innocent (albeit still complex) time when George and I could sit side-by-side in his office and munch cookies, without masks. The final sessions of this oral history archive both the challenges and strengths of the UC Santa Cruz campus during a moment that has now passed into an indeterminate future.

After retirement as chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, Blumenthal accepted a position as director of the Center for Studies in Higher Education (CSHE). Established in 1956, CSHE is the first research institute in the United States devoted to the study of higher education. He is also continuing to conduct his research and teach courses for UC Santa Cruz.

I wish to thank Teresa Bergen, transcriptionist, for her excellent work, good humor, and endurance in transcribing this voluminous project. As a UCSC alum and an artist with an interest in science, Teresa engaged with George's oral history and enjoyed the marathon. At one point, Teresa was even inspired to create and send me a beautiful greeting card inspired by George's astronomical research entitled "All I Need to Learn

about Dark Matter I Learned from My Black Cat.” (Earlier in his life, George had a Siamese cat he named Zwicky, after Fritz Zwicky, the astronomer who discovered dark matter.) I also wish to thank Teresa Mora, Head of Special Collections and Archives, for her unstinting support with this and other oral history endeavors.

Copies of this oral history 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, Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—Irene Reti

Director, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz, May 2021

Reti: Today is June 14, 2018, Thursday, and this is Irene Reti. I am here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our first interview in an oral history project that we're doing together. Chancellor Blumenthal has been at UCSC since 1972.

Blumenthal: Correct.

Reti: So we have a lot of chapters of UCSC history that we can cover together. But I wanted to start today—can I call you George? Is that okay?

Blumenthal: Please. Please, yes, of course.

Reti: I wanted to begin by taking you back to your early years and having you tell me a bit about your family history, even their immigration story. And then, what your growing up years were like.

Family History

Blumenthal: My father's parents immigrated to the US from Germany and France, I think from Alsace, which is on the border of Germany and France. I think my father's father came from probably the Berlinish area, but I'm not even sure of that. My grandmother, the woman he married and had my father with, was his second wife. I think his first wife died. I know relatively little about them. I know that my grandfather was very poor. He came to the US; he settled in Chicago and he sold fruit for a living on the streets. So he literally had a cart with a horse. I remember my father telling me that they always bought blind horses because blind horses were cheaper than horses with eyesight, and there was no need for a horse to have eyesight if you're just using them to sell fruit. So my father was very good at picking out fruit in the grocery store. (laughter)

But I know relatively little. My paternal grandfather died in 1936, so it was long before I was born. My paternal grandmother lived with us after I was born. But she died when I

was like two. I have only the vaguest memories of her. I'm not even sure they're real. There's a video that my uncle took where you can see her playing with me. But let me say it a different way—when I grew up, we had a bunch of housekeepers taking care of the kids. And I couldn't swear to you that my memories weren't of a housekeeper, rather than of my paternal grandmother.

I think the other thing that's of note, and it will become more important later, is that they were both Reform Jews. So far as I know, they lived in Chicago the entire time, my grandparents on that side. I'm not sure exactly when my father moved to Milwaukee, but it was probably around 1936. I'll say a little more about that later. But they were really Chicago people. And I know almost nothing else.

The only other thing I know is that years later, Bill Mathews was on a trip to Germany and he passed through a little town called Blumenthal, and so he sent me a little picture of it. (laughter) But given the history of my family, I doubt very much that they were rich enough or important enough to have a town named after them.

Reti: And you don't know why they came.

Blumenthal: I don't know why they came. They certainly came in the late 1800s. I suspect it was economic, but I don't know that for a fact. No, I'm afraid I know very little about them.

Reti: That's okay. That's a very common American experience, to not know that much about our ancestors.

Blumenthal: Exactly. My maternal grandparents, however, I know a lot more about, because they were alive until I was in my late teens or early twenties. I knew them quite well, and they lived in Milwaukee, so that was easy.

They came from the western part of Russia near the Polish border, near Odessa. They were from a little shtetl, which is a little town, in eastern Russia. They were Orthodox Jews, no ifs, ands or buts about that. They got married in the old country. I failed miserably in terms of getting my grandparents to talk about the old country. I tried to ask them about what it was like. I wanted to ask them if there had been pogroms in their town, etcetera. They just wouldn't talk about it. The only thing I ever knew was that my grandmother's mother didn't like my grandfather very much. I have no idea why. My great-grandmother didn't like my grandfather, who married her daughter. But I honestly don't know the reasons. The only reason I know that is because my mother told me that.

I could not get them to talk about the old country at all, but what I do know is that what motivated them to leave was that my grandfather was drafted into the czar's army. So I come from a very distinguished draft-dodging history. (Reti laughs) And for him the issue wasn't so much political—I mean, it was the czar's army—but it was religious, because he was an Orthodox Jew, which he remained all of his life, and there were no accommodations in the Russian Army for Orthodox Jews. I doubt if my grandfather ever ate a non-kosher meal in his entire life. So for him, it was unthinkable to go into the army.

So, he had to leave relatively early. He left alone. At that point, he and my grandmother had one child, a son named George, after whom I'm named. He left her and the boy in Russia, immigrated to the US, and moved to Connecticut, establishing himself in New Britain, Connecticut. I'm sure that what he did was very menial when he got to the US, but I'm not sure exactly what it was in New Britain. He was a very religious man. He was, to some extent, a Talmudic scholar, but he had no formal training. I know that later in their lives in the US, they had a small food store, a Mom and Pop grocery store. But that was in another place. I don't know what he did in New Britain. My guess is it was menial labor.

I think it is interesting that his name got changed when he came to the US. His name had been Odell Bank. And when he entered the US, they wrote it down as Banks. So that's how he became Odell Banks.

Seven years after he arrived, he sent for his wife and his son.

Reti: Seven years!

Blumenthal: They came over to New Britain. They lived there for a while, not that long, but my mother was born there in New Britain, Connecticut. Then they moved to Canton, Ohio. Why exactly Canton, Ohio, I don't know. But I do know that in Canton, they owned and ran a little corner grocery store. It wasn't much of anything, but it paid for food and stuff. Then they had three more children. One of them died very young, as an infant, I'm assuming from the flu, from one of the flu epidemics.

Oh, and just to put this into context, my father was born in 1900. My mother was born in 1910. So that's the general time frame.

So, they had three children, when my mother started growing up in Canton, Ohio. There was the older brother, George; my mother, who was the middle child; and the younger child, Joe. They stayed there for a fairly long time; I can't tell you exactly how long. I'm sure that George finished high school and went off to work while he was in Canton, because he ultimately opened a furniture store in Canton. And later, when Joe graduated high school, he joined as a partner. So they became Banks Brothers furniture in Canton, Ohio. My mother must have graduated from high school in Ohio.

But at a certain point, they moved to Milwaukee. From what I can gather, my grandfather got a job offer from a small synagogue in Milwaukee to become—I'm not even sure what the right word is—kind of a religious leader. He wasn't the rabbi. He wasn't an ordained

rabbi, but he probably knew as much as most Orthodox rabbis, just because he spent all his time studying the Bible and the Talmud and the Kabbalah and God knows what else. He was quite fluent. He read Hebrew; he read Russian and Polish, Yiddish, and English. I think in those days there were small groups of Orthodox Jews who weren't large enough or rich enough to afford a regular rabbi, so they had a religious leader who kind of led them. I think that was the role that he played. And that's why they came to Milwaukee.

By the time I have any memories of my grandparents, they had essentially retired, so they were living off Social Security, basically, and they lived in the middle of the Milwaukee black ghetto. The reason they did that was because the synagogue they attended was in the middle of the Milwaukee black ghetto. The traditional pattern in American cities is that WASPs live in an area, and then they move out, and Jews move into that area. And then the Jews moved out, and blacks or African Americans moved into those areas. It was well down that road by the time I was a little kid. It was, for me, an interesting experience. I would often go visit them. I would take the bus down to visit them. And it was just not a big deal. I mean, I just did it. They were probably the only white face within two or three miles of where they lived. That's probably an exaggeration. They actually got on well with their neighbors. This was prior to some of the issues that were taking place in the cores of American cities. Remember, this is the 1950s. Things started to blow up in the 1960s. And so, it was the most normal thing in the world.

They attended a very large synagogue in Milwaukee, Beth Israel. They were quite loyal to it and stayed there for many, many, many years.

Reti: And that's not the same place that he was working as a leader.

Blumenthal: No, no, no, no. This was a huge synagogue, although, during the Jewish high holidays, they also ran a separate service in the basement for less Orthodox people, which I know well, since I had to go to those things.

Religion was an important part of their lives. I don't know how familiar you are with Orthodox Judaism.

Reti: Somewhat. I'm actually partners with a rabbi. I'm Jewish. I wasn't raised Orthodox or anything like that, but I know something about it.

Blumenthal: Oh. Well, they did the whole nine yards.

Reti: Yeah, I can imagine.

Blumenthal: My grandmother went to the public baths once a month after she was having menstruation.

Reti: A mikveh [Jewish ritual bath], yes.

Blumenthal: It was the whole schmear. The synagogue was organized in a way that men could not sit with women, and all of that.

So that was pretty much their lives. They stayed there until the synagogue closed down, which was probably when I was a teenager, maybe sixteen or so. Then they moved to a different part of Milwaukee, closer to the west side, closer to where we lived. Not close, but closer. And that's where they stayed until my grandfather died at the age of eighty-nine. After that, my grandmother moved back to Canton, Ohio, to live with my uncle Joe, who was the remaining Banks brother. She lived with him for the rest of her life, which was another maybe three years, roughly speaking. She died, I think, at ninety-three or ninety-four. Note that she was a couple of years older than her husband.

Reti: So you have long-lived people on that side.

Blumenthal: Right. Yes. Thank God. (laughter)

I'm not sure what more to say about their lives, except that religion was the key part of their lives. I would also say about my grandmother—my grandmother was one of those women from an era where, she was illiterate. I don't think she could read or write. She spoke English well enough that she had no problem carrying on a conversation. She spoke mostly Yiddish. I suspect she wrote Russian at one point, although I wasn't actively aware of it.

Reti: Did you speak Yiddish with her?

Blumenthal: I spoke English with her. My parents spoke Yiddish with her. I could understand Yiddish, in those days, at least. I'm not sure I could anymore. I could even say a little bit. I wasn't really fluent. But the only time I experienced it was with my grandparents.

But my grandmother—this was some years later—but I still remember sitting down with her one day and she said to me, “You know, if I had it to do all over again, A, I would not have married this guy. (laughter) And B, I certainly wouldn't have kept up kosher and followed all the rules of orthodoxy for this many years.”

So I said to her, “Why don't you stop, then?”

And she said, “Well, I've invested eight decades in doing this. It seems rather pointless now.”

Reti: (laughs) To just stop.

Blumenthal: But I thought it was really interesting, that she would say that to me.

Reti: It is interesting, yes.

Blumenthal: And like many women from that era— it was clear she was a very smart and wise woman; she was a wise woman—but her wisdom didn't show through a lot because she was so subservient to her husband in so many different ways. There wasn't much opportunity for that to show through. But I've always felt that if I'd somehow known her better, I would have come to even a greater appreciation of both her intelligence and her wisdom. I thought she was a wise person.

I didn't think, by the way, that my grandfather was a particularly wise man. He was clearly a very smart man, clearly a very scholarly man. But he was very opinionated. And evidence? Nah. He would never use evidence to change his opinion. That's not the kind of person he was. His opinion was his opinion. Forever. So those are my grandparents.

My Uncle George died relatively young. I think he was in his forties, maybe even his early forties, when he died. He had just gotten married. Life was going well and I think he had a heart attack and died. I think this happened a little bit before I was born, and that's why I was named after him. But everybody seemed to like him. He was a very likable guy.

So my mother grew up in Canton. Here she was, she was growing up in this home where she had an older brother who was, I'm guessing, ten years older than her; and a younger brother; and a mother who really didn't interact with the world. I don't even know if she could speak English in those days. My mother never spoke English until she started playing with friends. They only spoke Yiddish at home. That's all she spoke. So she learned English literally from going out and playing with people out on the street. Then they sent her off to school. My grandmother told her brother, George, to take her to school and get her enrolled. So like any big brother, he took her to school and dropped her off and said, "Go get enrolled."

Reti: Oh, gosh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So my mother, who was a bit of a character, walked into the school and said, “I’m Lilly Blumenthal, and I’m ready to start second grade.” She didn’t want kindergarten; she didn’t want first grade. She just very brashly walked in and said, “I’m ready to start second grade.” In those days, they never checked anything, right? So they enrolled her in second grade. (Reti laughs) So she was either fifteen or sixteen by the time she graduated from high school. She did well in school. My mother was an extremely smart, bright, intelligent woman. She was a bit of a math whiz, too. She could do mental arithmetic like nobody’s business. She taught me to do mental arithmetic. Very, very smart. It’s clear that of all the people in the world who should have gone to college, she was one of them. There was zero chance she could do that, born in 1910. She graduated in the mid-1920s from high school, a bit before the Great Depression. Her family was poor. There was no question about her going to college. It wasn’t even an issue.

Reti: It wasn’t even about gender. It was just about class.

Blumenthal: Oh, no. I don’t even think it was about gender. Neither of her brothers went to college. I didn’t know George, but Joe was clearly smart enough to have gone to college.

So when she graduated from high school, she went and got a job in an office. That was around the time they moved to Milwaukee. She got a job in some office, sort of as an office worker. She lied on her employment form, saying she was eighteen.

Reti: She was more like sixteen and a half?

Blumenthal: Yes. So she had this job. They really liked her. And when her birthday came, she went to her boss and she said, “Look, I’ve been lying to you. My conscience

won't let me continue this. I have to tell you the truth. I wasn't really eighteen when you hired me. I was really seventeen. But I just had my birthday and now I'm eighteen."

He was nice. He said, "Oh, you're a really valuable worker and we're really pleased to have you. And okay, let's move on."

So a year later she went to him again and she said, "Well, actually, I have to tell you. I was lying to you—"

Reti: (laughs) I love it. "Now I'm eighteen."

Blumenthal: "I was lying to you last year. And now I really am eighteen." (laughter)

Reti: Whoa. (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: So they kept her on, and she worked in that office. I think it was working in that office where she met my father. I think she worked there a fairly long time. They got married in 1939. She was born in 1910, so she was twenty-nine when they got married.

Reti: Oh. That was old for a woman in those days to get married.

Blumenthal: That's right. So, maybe they met a year earlier. I don't know exactly. But apparently, they met at the office. He had come into the office for some purpose and came and sat on the desk. He was a very handsome guy. Somehow, they struck up a conversation and the rest is history. And that is pretty much all I have to say about my mother, at least for now.

My father, I know relatively little about as well. I always assumed, growing up, that he had graduated from high school. Only many, many, many years later, like just a couple of years ago, my sister told me that in fact he'd only graduated from eighth grade. She got that from the census data. I suspect it's true. I don't remember him ever saying he graduated,

nor do I even remember him talking about high school. Maybe he lied, and said he did, or maybe he just never said anything and I made the assumption. Either of those could have been true. But he really had an eighth-grade education.

I know relatively little about him in the years before he moved to Milwaukee. I know that his family was poor. I suspect that his family was highly dysfunctional in many ways. I know that he had a half-brother who's the son of the first wife of my grandfather. My father was the son of the second wife. They never got along at all. And I know my father talked frequently about, when he was controlling *his* children, that we got away with so much more than he ever could get away with. It made me wonder how strict the household that he was raised in was. I suspect very strict. He said he learned about sex by listening in at doors.

He married my mother in 1939. They got married on the day that Hitler invaded Poland, a very portentous day.

Reti: September 1, 1939.

Blumenthal: He had moved to Milwaukee around 1936 because he and a friend jointly bought this Venetian blind company. They may have started it. I'm not sure whether they started it, or whether they bought it. But it wasn't much of anything before that. The other guy was the guy who dealt with manufacturing, and my father, who was very personable, was the salesman. I think before doing that—I know relatively little—but I know that he, for a while, sold medical equipment. He was a traveling salesman, and he would go around. He sometimes told stories about going to medical schools and interacting with medical students as he sold equipment, but he never said a whole lot about it. He was very much tethered to Chicago. In fact, since 1936 was when his father died, I suspect that he left Chicago only after his father died. That's my suspicion. He was very tied

psychologically to his parents, particularly his father, in many ways. I say that because I was always struck as a kid that he would frequently go to Chicago to attend to their graves. As a kid, I thought that was really weird. I went with him sometimes. And maybe I'm an unfeeling person, but I've never once gone to my parents' graves after their funerals. Of course, it's two thousand miles away. But even so, when I was in the town, I still didn't. That was not one of the stops I was looking forward to making. So again, I could be wrong. I think the culture of life changes. People used to be much more attuned to visiting graves and stuff like that than they are today. So maybe I'm reading too much into that.

But he did go to Chicago a lot. I often went with him to Chicago. He always remained loyal to the city. I remember he took me to a Chicago White Sox game. I was so young, I didn't even know what it was. I remember it, but I don't even think I knew the rules of baseball yet.

They started this Venetian blind-building business called Milwaukee Venetian Blind Company. They manufactured Venetian blinds and sold them to people in their houses, sold to the city, and sold to companies. Allis-Chalmers was a big company in Milwaukee, so they had a contract to supply them. I don't think they ever got rich from doing this. I don't think they had a lot of money, but they made a decent living. I would have put them in the middle to upper-middle class level for their times. They worked very, very hard, which for me was actually probably a good thing. It instilled in me a certain level of commitment. They literally worked seven days a week. They would go in on weekends. That's when they washed Venetian blinds. Occasionally, they would take a day off. But pretty much, they worked seven days. It was both of them. My mother manned the front office and was involved in putting together the blinds. My father sometimes put together blinds, and also was the salesperson. When they got married, he bought out the partner, so it was a solo business.

Reti: It was just him.

Blumenthal: Again, I'm not sure. There was some bad blood there, and I'm not sure I know much about it. At the time, lots of people had Venetian blinds and bought them from small shops. Today if you want Venetian blinds, you go on Amazon and you buy them. It's a very different world. I remember—jumping fast forward—many, many years later, when my mother died, maybe twenty-five years ago, my sister and I decided when we were in Milwaukee for the funeral to stop by the store. We went there and it was still open. The guy who had bought it from my parents was still there.

Reti: Oh, that's nice.

Blumenthal: We had a nice chat with him about the business. It sure sounded like it was a crummy business by that point. (laughter)

Early Life

Reti: Did you grow up helping in the business?

Blumenthal: I sure did. I worked there a lot. I could put together and take apart a venetian blind like you couldn't believe, when I was like five years old. This little venetian blind, I kept putting it together and taking it apart. When they had to put together a bunch of blinds, I often helped them out. So, yeah, I did know the business. Throughout the time I lived in Milwaukee, I periodically helped them, to various extents. For a number of years, I would go in with them on weekends to help wash venetian blinds. They would pay me, so I regarded it as a job.

They almost never took vacations. Growing up, we took very, very few vacations. A big vacation was to go to a resort in Illinois called Starved Rock for three days.

Reti: Starved Rock?

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Interesting name.⁵

Blumenthal: Yeah. I'm not sure I even know why it was called that. But they rarely took vacations. The only time I ever remember them taking one while they were working was—by that time I was about sixteen—and they decided to take a car trip around northern Wisconsin. It was a quiet time of the year and I agreed I would watch the business and go in every day. The reason I remember it so vividly is because by that time I was driving. I didn't have a car, but I was driving my father's car. But they had a truck at the business—I think you would call it a paneled truck. It was a truck with the back enclosed. But it was a stick shift. My mother was always on my case about learning to drive a stick shift. I learned to drive on an automatic, but she really wanted me to learn to drive a stick. I wasn't all that interested. But she kept bugging me. So I finally agreed to have my father teach me to drive a stick. He did not teach me to drive, by the way. That would never have worked. So she got us to go out to teach me to drive a stick. That lesson lasted about five minutes because very quickly I mashed the gears a little, my father yelled at me, and I said, "This lesson is over." I would not do it anymore. It made my mother really angry.

So when they went off for this vacation, she said to me, "George, if you had learned to drive a stick shift, instead of taking the bus across town, you could have driven the truck home every night." Well, guess what happened? We lived in the northwest part of Milwaukee. My mom used to tell me that some people, when she gave them our address, they thought it was out in the sticks somewhere. Actually, it was in the city limits, but it was pretty far out. And their business was on the south side of downtown. It was way across the city of Milwaukee. It was a long distance. It was a long bus ride to take. So after

she told me that, my first day I fished out the truck keys, and drove that damn thing home. (Reti laughs) Yeah, exactly. But I did learn to drive a stick shift.

Reti: For the reader who can't see this, I'm making rabbit hop motions across the desk here.

Blumenthal: But it was a long distance from home to work and back again. They went in together every morning and they would come home at night, often stopping at night at a food store to pick up something for dinner. My mother would cook dinner, hardly what we would call an equitable distribution of homemaking tasks. My mother would never have told you she was a great homemaker. She didn't aspire to be that and she didn't even feel particularly guilty about it. But you know, we all had to eat. And we never had a freezer, and we never had a big refrigerator.

My parents were also very tight with money. These are people who grew up in the Depression, and went through the Depression. I think that's not uncommon in that period. But my childhood was not one of lavish expenditure. They'd go to the bakery and bring home a box of broken cookies, because they were cheaper.

Reti: That sounds familiar. My parents grew up in that era as well and we ate day-old bread. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So anyway, that was my parents. That's what they did. They would stop once a week to visit my grandparents on the way home.

Reti: So obviously, they were working seven days a week. They were not keeping Shabbat in a kind of Orthodox way?

Blumenthal: Oh, no. I'm sorry. I should have been clearer about that. My grandparents, my maternal grandparents, were strict Orthodox, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. My

paternal grandparents and my father were Reform Jews. I think Reform Judaism may have even started in Germany originally. So I think they were a part of that movement. So, when my father started dating my mother, this led to some interesting issues. My grandfather, my mother's father, actually hired a private investigator to investigate my father to make sure that he was legitimately Jewish, which I find highly amusing.

In the early years of their marriage, my parents lived with my grandparents. They didn't have much money. I think after they had my sister Annette, who I haven't quite come to yet, they moved out into a rental place of some sort, I think maybe a duplex, and stayed there a few years. My sister started school where they were renting. So they were there for a few years.

And then roughly a year or two after I was born, probably, maybe even less than that, maybe about when I was born, they bought our house in Milwaukee. They bought a house out in the sticks. I think it was like the first house or the second house on the block when they bought it, although it filled in around there. But they knew that a new school was opening. That was an important factor.

But this tension, this religious tension, stayed for a long time. I will come back to it when we talk about my upbringing. But yeah, my parents were very irreligious Jews. They did go to the Jewish High Holidays every year. And occasionally, like once a year, of their own volition they would go to services on a Friday night at a Reform synagogue somewhere in town. They were members of the same synagogue that my grandparents went to, the Orthodox one. They were actually members there. They just never went there, except on High Holidays.

Then there was my sister. Annette was five years older than me. It was nice having an older sister. She knew the ropes about things long before I did. Very smart. Always did

very well in school. Interestingly enough, she and I looked alike. I literally would get on the bus sometimes in Milwaukee when I was going to high school, and someone would come up to me and say, “Are you Annette Blumenthal’s brother?” I didn’t see it, but the world saw it, evidently, and occasionally I would run into friends of hers. Five years is enough apart that we didn’t share friends in common as a part of our lives. But she was a really important part of my life because she brought a level of sanity to my world. I’m just enormously grateful to her for that, and remain so. I need to tell her that.

She transferred to 81st Street School, where I went, later when they moved. Then she went to a different junior high than I did, because my junior high had not yet opened, which was closer to the neighborhood. Then she went to the same high school I did, and did well. After high school, she went to University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, which I’m not sure I would say was new. UWM had been like a state teachers’ college and at a certain point, they decided to convert it to a part of the university. That was a little bit before she started. But the campus wasn’t hardly even there when she started because they had space in a big building downtown, and on what later was their main campus. So it was kind of a weird situation.

She started school in a weird way, too because she had a slipped disc and was in terrible pain for a long time. Finally, after a year of going to a million different doctors, they diagnosed the slipped disc and a neurosurgeon suggested surgery. So she had the surgery. Today if you have surgery, you’re in and out in a day. She was in the hospital for two weeks. She recovered, and she was fine afterwards, so it did the job. But she had that surgery just as she was starting school. It was tough for her, but she got through it.

So she certainly went to college before me, by like five years, but she didn’t graduate. She got married. That wasn’t what stopped her from graduating. What stopped her from

graduating—and this is so ironic—was that she couldn't pass a course in physics or chemistry. Her major was in early childhood education. She wanted to be a teacher and for some reason she had to take a lab course in physics or chemistry. She tried physics. Failed miserably. Tried again. She couldn't get it. To this day, I'm still puzzled by that, since ultimately, that was my profession. She was very good in math, too. It wasn't as though she couldn't do the math, but there was something there that was a roadblock for her. Note that several years later she did finally get her bachelor's degree. She had more than enough credits to graduate, and when the university changed their requirements to no longer require physics, she applied for and received her degree.

So anyway, for me it was a real advantage to have a sister.

I attended 81st Street School as an elementary school student. It was only a few blocks away. In those days, it was not a big problem to have kids walk to school, something that I wouldn't think of doing today with a child, letting them walk three or four blocks to school. In those days, it wasn't even on the radar screen that there was anything wrong with that, even for a kid in kindergarten.

I went to school every day. I had a key, so when I got home, I let myself in. My mother was working and I didn't see her till six or seven, or whenever it was she would get home. So I watched a lot of cartoons, or I'd go out and play baseball, or do whatever I felt like doing after I got home. I didn't think it was an unusual life, although I was one of the few kids whose mother worked, which frankly, I'm grateful for. It gave me an appreciation and a set of social perceptions that have served me well. But it was unusual.

Anyway, so that was my life until I was around nine. Then when I was around nine, something really bad happened, which is that due to pressure from my grandfather, I had to go to Hebrew school.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I didn't just have to go to Hebrew school; I had to go to an Orthodox Hebrew school. So I did that for four long years.

Reti: Oh, for your bar mitzvah.

Blumenthal: Six days a week. It was an after-school thing.

Reti: Six days a week?!

Blumenthal: Six days a week.

Reti: And you had had no connection, really very little connection, with Judaism.

Blumenthal: Very little connection.

Reti: Other than the High Holidays.

Blumenthal: I had gone to Sunday school at the synagogue where my parents were members, and my grandparents were very active members. I really didn't like Sunday school there. One of my earliest memories is asking a question when the rabbi came into one of the classes. We had just heard the story of Adam and Eve. I was just a little kid. I didn't understand how, if they were the first people, and Cain and Abel were their children, how Cain could have been killed by his blind uncle. (Reti laughs) It just didn't make sense to me. So I asked the rabbi, and he just kind of pushed me off and encouraged me not to ask questions like that. So I kind of concluded this was all worthless and I stopped going as soon as my parents would let me.

But when I turned nine, I had to go to Hebrew school. This was clearly my grandfather's influence. It was Dickensian. It was called, of all things, the New Method Hebrew School.

It was about as new method as anything 19th century could be. It was literally a room with about eighty boys.

Reti: Eighty?

Blumenthal: Eighty boys in long rows of desks, with one teacher. And, oh my God, was that awful. I hated it. Like any kid, I adapted. But I hated it. I resented it, and I really minded that it kept me from other activities. Like when I was in sixth grade, the teacher wanted to make me the captain of cadets, the school cadets, and traffic cadets. But I couldn't do it, because I had to rush off to go to Hebrew school.

Reti: Were there other Jewish kids in your elementary school?

Blumenthal: Relatively few. We lived in a neighborhood that was not a Jewish neighborhood. There were a few, like two or three in a class, and most of those were Reform Jews who went to other places. I don't think there was anyone in my school who went through the New Method Hebrew School.

Reti: Did you experience anti-Semitism at school?

Blumenthal: Not particularly.

Reti: Or in the neighborhood?

Blumenthal: The only thing I ever remember that I resented was having to sing Christmas carols at Christmas.

Reti: Nobody was beating you up or anything like that?

Blumenthal: No, no. Nothing like that. So I did this thing till I was thirteen and I was bar mitzvahed. I even remember the rabbi's name, Rabbi Arm. But I can tell you—do you mind my telling you stories?

Reti: No, no. That's fine.

Blumenthal: All right. So can we put a pin here?

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: I have a good story for you. Many years later, my wife and I were married. We were living in Santa Cruz. My wife had a friend who she went to high school with, who was getting married on the beach at Carmel. She was getting married to a guy who belonged to a Swedish Lutheran church in San Francisco. But this woman who was getting married had promised her father on his death bed that she would have a Jewish wedding. So they decided that even though they were having this wedding in San Francisco at this church, before then she would get married for real on the beach in Carmel with a rabbi. So she asked Kelly, my wife, to find them a rabbi. Kelly is really good at doing such stuff. (Reti laughs) She had to make a lot of calls. Not many rabbis will marry Jews to non-Jews. Not many rabbis will travel to Carmel to marry somebody. But she found a guy in San Jose who would do it. And we were the only people going to the wedding.

It turns out this rabbi was going to take the Greyhound bus to Santa Cruz. I was supposed to pick him up at the bus station, and pick up Kelly. Then we were going to go down to Carmel and go to this wedding. So I went to the Greyhound station on Front Street. The bus came in, no one-armed rabbis got off the bus. I'm looking around, who is this guy? And I brushed up a guy wearing a jacket, wondering if he had two arms. And he did. (laughs) I went and looked in the bathroom. I looked everywhere. I couldn't find this guy.

I'm responsible for bringing the guy who's going to marry these people, right? So I went to the desk several times. "You sure there's not another bus from San Jose?"

Reti: (laughs) "You're hiding a rabbi somewhere."

Blumenthal: I was just about ready to give up when they got a call at the bus station. I was overhearing enough of the call that I came to realize it was probably related to me and this rabbi. So I asked them. They said yeah. So they put me on the phone with this guy who was the rabbi. He'd taken the wrong bus and he ended up in Gilroy. I said, "Don't worry. We'll make this right. I'll grab my wife. We'll go over, we'll pick you up in Gilroy." I said, "Where are you in Gilroy?" He said, "I'm in a restaurant. Where am I?" He asked somebody. They said, "You're at the Three Brothers Bar." I said, "Fine. We'll pick you up. We'll find it; we'll pick you up."

So I got Kelly and we got in the car. We drove to Gilroy, went to the street, and we're driving up and down the street. I couldn't find the Three Brothers Bar. Fortunately, Kelly's smarter than I am. And she said, "Oh! There it is, Los Tres Hermanos."

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: (laughs) Who would have thought? We found the rabbi. So we connected with him and drove him to Carmel. It was funny because he sat in the front with me. We chatted for a while. In the course of the conversation, he asked me if I'd been bar mitzvahed. I said yeah, I had, at an Orthodox synagogue. He asked me who the rabbi was. And without thinking, I told him the truth: Rabbi Arm. (laughter)

Reti: That's pretty cute.

Blumenthal: So anyway, so sorry for that little departure.

Reti: That's great. That's fun.

Blumenthal: All right. So where were we?

Reti: You had to go to Hebrew school, Orthodox Hebrew school.

Blumenthal: And then have an Orthodox bar mitzvah. So literally, after my bar mitzvah, since I'm now supposedly a man and could make decisions for myself, one decision I made was never to go back. (laughter) I think the next time I set foot in a synagogue was probably when my grandfather died, which was many years later, probably six, seven, eight years later. I probably never set foot in a synagogue when I was an undergraduate or graduate student. I suspect the next time I set foot in a synagogue was when I was dating my wife in San Francisco. She belonged to a synagogue and was doing Tay-Sachs testing. Okay, sorry, getting way ahead.

So I flunked kindergarten.

Reti: Why? (laughs)

Blumenthal: I started kindergarten at the age of four. I was almost five, but I was still at the age of four. This was around 1950 and everything was expanding. Even though the school was brand new, it was already chock full. So the teachers called in my parents, as well as the parents of a friend of mine down the block whose birthday was one day off from mine, and gave them the spiel that we really couldn't advance to the first grade, we weren't mature enough, etcetera, etcetera. Well, actually what I think it was, was that they were overcrowded. They didn't have room and they picked the two youngest to hold back for another semester. So for many years thereafter, I was kind of in the off semester, which was something of a pain. Anyway. Yeah, so I flunked kindergarten. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) So how did you feel about school as you started school?

Blumenthal: I liked school well enough. It really depended on the teachers. Some teachers I really, really liked; some teachers I really, really hated. It's as simple as that.

Reti: Did you gravitate toward science, even in elementary school?

Blumenthal: No. Not at all.

Reti: Oh. Interesting.

Blumenthal: No. I barely knew what the word meant, actually. I was interested in baseball. I went to a lot of Milwaukee Braves games. I could probably have recited to you all twenty-five members of the Milwaukee Braves team, and maybe even their batting averages. I was an avid Milwaukee Braves fan and later became a Green Bay Packers fan, when Vince Lombardi came to the Green Bay Packers and transformed it. Those were really heady times in Wisconsin. Yeah, that's where my interest was.

My parents decided I needed music lessons, so they signed me up for music lessons. I got to choose, so I chose trumpet, which I did for about a year. I wasn't particularly talented. Later, when they got a piano, they insisted I get piano lessons. I was mechanically fine, but not an inspired piano player, and didn't really pursue it after about a year. I somehow managed to persuade them to let me stop. This was not, for me, a fun and creative thing. My sister was much better. My sister was really good in violin and piano. She has perfect pitch. You can play a note and she can tell you exactly what it is. She's quite intrinsically talented, whereas I did not have that intrinsic talent.

So, it really depended year to year. There were teachers who I really loved, and there were teachers who I didn't. So how I felt varied from year to year in elementary school. But did I like school? I would never have admitted it, but I did.

I also lived through the polio scare of the early fifties. I remember it very vividly because they closed the schools. So instead of opening school in September, they didn't open school. They wanted all schoolchildren to watch the educational TV channel. They had classes on the channel. The whole Milwaukee public school system was closed, I think it was like for a month, or six weeks. It was an extended period of time because of the polio epidemic. I remember going to the doctor and getting gamma globulin shots, which probably weren't all that useful against the polio virus, but nobody knew that at the time. I remember being afraid, because it sounded awful being in an iron lung, etcetera.

But then the Salk vaccine came in. My wife can tell you a little bit more about that because Kelly grew up in Pittsburgh. Her father was a doctor and they lived down the block from Jonas Salk. So she was actually in the first group of kids that were given the Salk vaccine. She said one day, right after getting the vaccine, she developed a fever. So her father called up Jonas Salk and he came over, because he was concerned that there was something wrong with it. But it turned out to be nothing.

So, anyway, we lived through that. The thing in those days I do remember was the Sputnik years. I guess I was in elementary school during Sputnik. It was a big deal. It was a big deal because Russia launched this satellite, and then for a long period of time, every time the US tried to launch a satellite, it would explode on the way up. It took a while before the US launched its first satellite. The first manned space flight was a Russian, Yuri Gagarin. Those were the days when, in the middle of the Cold War, it looked like the Russians were quote "winning" unquote. Well, in fact, being able to do that wasn't necessarily that huge a deal. But people took it as such.

Reti: It was symbolic.

Blumenthal: It was symbolic. A lot of coverage. I always watched all of the space launches avidly, as did my family. That was a big deal.

The other thing I remember, which I had no idea was going to have an influence in my life later, was watching the passage of the Echo 1 satellite. Echo 1 was the first communication satellite ever launched. It was nothing more than a humongous balloon. It was a balloon they launched into space. They inflated the balloon. It probably had a silvered surface to be reflective. That's all it was: a big mirror, big balloon mirror. But it was so big, you could see it with your naked eye at either dusk or dawn. I remember going out into my parents' backyard at dusk and looking up at the sky, and literally watching the satellite crossing the sky, because the orbit was about ninety minutes. So you could literally see it moving. That was really impressive to me, that you could see this manmade object in orbit. I was fascinated by it. Little did I know that that satellite would lead to a discovery that would greatly influence my life.

That must have been launched around '63, '64, would be my guess. And at the time, there were two scientists at Bell Labs. Bell Labs was the research arm of the telephone company, AT&T. It was literally the telephone company. There were two scientists: Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, and what they were doing is they were bouncing microwave signals off of this satellite, Echo 1, and then watching the return signals.⁶

Reti: That's why it was called Echo 1?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Exactly. What they wanted to do was use it for communications, but they kept getting too much signal back. So they'd bounce a signal off, and when they looked at their receiver, which was a really high-tech receiver for the time, they saw more signal than they expected to see. The way radio astronomers characterized signals, they characterize it in terms of absolute temperature. Temperature is in degrees Kelvin, which

is absolute temperature. They were seeing a three-degree excess signal and they couldn't explain it.

They decided it had to be bird droppings, so they went out and scrubbed the surface of their detector. They had this telescope to see the microwave radiation. They scrubbed that. Didn't make any difference. They kept seeing it. Finally, a guy who was at MIT but had been visiting Princeton University, by the name of Bernie Burke, came by one day to see their telescope and their device. They were describing this problem to him of seeing this excess signal. And he says, "It's funny. I just came from Princeton. There's a guy there, Robert Dicke. He wants to do an experiment to look for radiation from the early universe. And I think you may have found it."

Reti: Wow. That's amazing.

Blumenthal: So they wrote a paper. I've read the paper, of course. One of the most boring papers in the world. It's entitled something like, "On the Detection of an Excess Signal at 3.5 Centimeters," blah, blah, blah, blah. (Reti laughs) And then at the end of the paper, this little comment says this excess radiation could be radiation left over from the big bang.

Reti: Wow. "By the way."

Blumenthal: Well, that line won them the Nobel Prize in physics and fame and fortune thereafter. Arno Penzias is retired. He now lives in the Bay Area, actually. It was one of the great discoveries of the 20th century and it was completely by accident. I ended up doing my dissertation largely on some of the implications of that radiation. But that's ahead still. (laughs)

Reti: Okay, so I'm still stuck on the: when does George get interested in science question.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And you know, I'm not sure I can give you as clear an answer to that. I was certainly interested in space exploration and the like. But I wasn't sure I was interested in science.

I went to a middle school called Wilbur Wright Junior High School. I went to seventh grade and then half of eighth grade. Then I took summer school to skip the other half of eighth grade, which was yet another experience. Ninth grade was the start of high school in Milwaukee in those days. You did that at your middle school, and only went to high school for tenth grade. So I had some choices. I chose to take Spanish. But I had to choose a social science or a science. One choice was general science; one choice was ancient history; and the third choice was citizenship. I knew I didn't want to do general science, because that sounded boring. I knew I didn't want to do ancient history, because that sounded even more boring. (Reti laughs) So I took the course in citizenship. It was not well thought through. At that point in my life, the concept that I would be a scientist was just the craziest idea you could imagine.

Reti: I guess partly what I'm curious about is, what were the expectations for you as a child?

Blumenthal: Oh, good question. There was always an expectation from day one that both my sister and I would, A, do well in school, and B, go to college. That was a given from day one. It was like: the sky is blue. This was not a questionable thing. Both my sister and I did very well in school. I used to resent the fact that it was an expectation. I had friends who would get paid for every A. I never got a red cent for my As and I got a lot of them. So that expectation was there. The expectation was we'd go to college. I had no idea what going to college meant. Remember, first generation. I had no clue. I had no idea where it would be. My parents talked about maybe I would go to Marquette University,

which was in Milwaukee. It's a small Catholic university. It's not a bad place. It's a pretty good university. But anyway, but nothing very explicit or clear. Just that was always an expectation.

Reti: Just "go to college." But nothing about who were you going to be when you grow up?

Blumenthal: No. My grandfather, in particular, had a very strong opinion ever since I was a little kid that there were two acceptable professions for me. One was to be a physician, and the other was to be a rabbi. It was easy to rebel against being a rabbi, since I didn't believe in any of that stuff. In terms of being a physician, I wasn't real comfortable seeing blood. I felt that that would not be a good profession for me. (laughter) But other than thinking negatively, I never thought much about it one way or another. I just know that I really didn't want to take general science in ninth grade, largely out of ignorance. I had no idea what it was. I might have even been reflecting my sister's prejudices. You know how you pick up things. I did pick up a lot of things. When I was a kid, I had surgery. I had plastic surgery on my ears. My ears used to stick out like an elephant, with no creases or anything, just sort of flat elephant ears. I didn't care. I was fine with it. My mother, in particular, was not happy. So when I was in third grade, they did plastic surgery. And my sister kept saying, "I had my tonsils out and that ether really hurts." So I was expecting the anesthesia to be very painful. But in fact, anesthesia is anything but painful.

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: You listen to what others say.

Anyway, so, no. I really didn't have that interest in middle school. In middle school, I'm not sure I really developed much. I enjoyed Spanish as a language. I've always enjoyed math. Math was always my thing. There was never any question about that. Math was my

thing. And junior high was very, very good. I was way more advanced, or capable of going much faster. Again, in those days they didn't have advanced courses for kids in junior high.

Reti: Oh, no AP or—

Blumenthal: None of that. Well, I'll talk about that in high school.

I wanted to just shoot back to a couple of other neighborhood things, just to get them out of the way so I don't forget them. One was, I mentioned my parents' small business. The other thing I noted is that—and I think both of these had an effect on me culturally—one was, they had two employees that were part time. They each had full-time jobs doing other stuff. But when things were busy, they would come and do some work. One was a guy named Jack, who I really liked. He was such a nice guy. Occasionally, I would tag along with him if he went out to do a job. I really liked him. He was a decent guy, had a couple of kids. He ended up with Hodgkin's disease. He went downhill very, very fast, and he died. That was devastating. It was one of the first deaths of somebody I knew well that I ever can remember. I was pretty devastated, because he was such a sweet guy. And he had children. My parents were rather distraught by this and my parents were not people who got distraught at things. They didn't get emotional about stuff. I think his death really did affect them. It affected me, too.

The other one was a guy, Vince somebody or other. I can't remember his last name. What was striking about him was he was maybe thirty and he had nine children, all boys. So he had a baseball team. He would stop by the house when he was doing work for them, to report in, or give them stuff that he'd picked up on the job. He would stop in and chat. I remember thinking, nine kids?! Well, it turns out that he was Catholic, and complained bitterly about the fact that he couldn't use birth control. I was completely puzzled by that.

I didn't understand why that was something that would constrain somebody. But nine boys.

Oh, and worse than that, the reason he had to work for my parents was because he had to send his kids to parochial school, which had tuition.

Reti: Oh, to pay for all those nine children.

Blumenthal: So the guy was driving himself amazingly hard. But he seemed like a really nice guy.

The other thing I wanted to mention, mainly because it gives you a sense of why I'm sometimes skeptical about things—we had two next door neighbors at home. One was a really nice guy. He was the station manager for the educational TV station in Milwaukee, their equivalent of KQED (I can't remember the call letters anymore). But clearly a very educated guy. His wife was into drama. She did a lot of acting. They had two adopted children. I saw them a lot, because I babysat for them. In fact, all the way through middle school and high school, I babysat for them. They were a nice couple, an interesting couple. They were even Democrats. (Reti laughs) Well, my parents were Republican.

Reti: Oh, they were. I was wondering about that.

Blumenthal: In fact, remarkably conservative Republicans. Again, they were small business owners, so that may have driven a lot of their views of politics. Milwaukee in those years, in the 1950s, during the McCarthy era, still had a socialist mayor. Frank Zeidler, and he was mayor for many years. He was a socialist. A very heavy union town. A lot of factories. A lot of union workers. So the politics in Milwaukee was extremely democratic, extremely liberal for the time, and the mayor was, as I say, a socialist. But my parents were fairly conservative Republicans in their outlook, which I found really

interesting, and somewhat fascinating, given the fact that their economic circumstances were not high. But I can understand the business owner piece of it. The other thing is, they were strong supporters of Israel, and for a lot of Jews in those years, Democrats could do no wrong because it was Harry Truman who recognized Israel. My grandparents were strong Democratic supporters, if for no other reason than that the Democrats were the group that embraced Israel.

And it was meaningful that, I should add, my father had relatives in Germany who were killed during the Holocaust. In fact, one of those relatives apparently wrote a letter to him in the late 1930s asking for money so he could get out of Germany. My parents were so poor, they didn't have enough money to send. And the letter was in German, so my father, who spoke a little German, but not enough, actually had to have it translated. So he sent the letter on to his half-brother, with whom he didn't get along very well. But so far as I know, nothing ever came of it and that relative perished.

Reti: Wow. That's poignant.

Blumenthal: So the Holocaust was a big deal for my family.

Reti: So were you aware about what had happened?

Blumenthal: Well I was born during—

Reti: I know, of course. But I mean, afterwards.

Blumenthal: As a little kid, they did tell me that story.

Reti: You did know about the Holocaust.

Blumenthal: It was one of the family stories that was told.

Reti: And you knew what had happened.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. Of course.

Reti: Because that was an era where some people just didn't talk about it at all.

Blumenthal: Oh, no, no. My father had been a victim of anti-Semitism. You asked whether I ever experienced it at school. Well, my father talked about being in Chicago and how there were gangs. There was the gang of Jews who protected each other, and the non-Jews who protected each other, and they fought all the time. That was the world he grew up in.

But anyway, our neighbors were Democrats, which was kind of interesting. Even though I wasn't a Democrat, I kind of looked at them in amusement, but I admired them, in a way. It set a seed down for me.

The neighbor on the other side was an interesting guy. He was an army veteran who became, ultimately, the building inspector for Milwaukee. It was fascinating. He was also an alcoholic. He had parties all the time. You'd never see him without a drink in his hands. When he went into the hospital for liver problems, his wife sneaked drinks in for him. That's how bad it was. Every Christmas, there'd be this line of trucks that would come to the house and drop off cases and cases of liquor. Why do you think that might have happened? Well of course, he was the building inspector and that was the way business was done.

Reti: That's the way things worked then.

Blumenthal: That's the way things worked. Well, fortunately for me, the other thing he got frequently was free baseball tickets. So every now and then, he would give me a couple of tickets to the Milwaukee Braves games and I'd go to the games. Nowadays you sit in the

stadium in fancy boxes. In those days, there were no fancy boxes in stadiums, but there was something called the mezzanine box seats, which were the most expensive seats in the stadium. And that's where these tickets were always to.

Reti: Oh, nice.

Blumenthal: They were always different places. I'd bring a friend with me. We'd sit in these super fancy seats. People sitting next to me were saying, "Do you know who owns those seats?" I'd say no. "Oh, it's owned by the Pfister Hotel," or it's owned by this group, you know, big companies in town. He would get them for free. So I developed a healthy cynicism about the workings of government.

Reti: I see, that's what you were going with this story—yeah. Okay. So, well, this is great for today, George. Thank you.

Reti: All right. So today is June 26, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I am here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for the second session of the oral history we're doing together. So George, today we're going to start by talking about your high school years, and some of the key teachers, and how you got interested in science, what else you were interested in.

Blumenthal: Great. I've looked forward to this. I finally get to go to high school. (Reti laughs) So, oh, here we go. I went to a place called Washington High School. And just to contextualize it a little bit, I think I told you that I flunked kindergarten.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: And therefore, I was kind of in the half semesters. So what I did to fix that up was I took the second half of eighth grade in summer school. So I started ninth grade in the fall to kind of regularize myself with regard to the school system. That meant going down to some crummy neighborhood in Milwaukee and taking some summer classes that

were really silly and stupid. But that's what I did. I think it was a wise thing to have done. When I was growing up, at least, ninth grade was still at the junior high. So I took courses like Spanish; I think I mentioned citizenship; and of course math. I didn't take science.

At the end of ninth grade, I moved to high school, which in this case was Washington High School in Milwaukee. I was very lucky, because Washington High School in those days was a very, very good public high school. It was several miles from where I lived, maybe four miles from where I lived, so I had to take the bus there. But it was a very, very good high school, and I think I benefited a huge amount from it.

Overall in high school, I did well. I graduated with a 3.93 grade point average. It's scary that I remember that. (Reti laughs) I was, by no means, the valedictorian. There were three students in high school that had a 4.0. But I clearly did very well. And of course I remember every course in which I didn't get an A.

There were a couple of interesting things about high school for me. One is that I never did homework. I went through three years of high school and never once did I take homework home. (laughs) It's almost embarrassing. But in a way, I found it very easy. If there were study halls, I would do the homework in study hall. For a couple of years, I volunteered, I think, one or two periods a day to work in the counseling office. So during the downtime there, I would do my homework. I literally never brought homework home, which probably means I wasn't challenged enough. But I took some pride in that, I guess. So there was no homework.

This was still in the old days before people came up with ideas like AP classes. This was just at the very beginning. When I was a sophomore they called me into the counseling office to interview with Dr. Deutsch, who was their local psychologist, because they were putting together some advanced classes of one sort or another and they were trying to

decide who among the then-current sophomores should go into junior advanced classes. I didn't think one way or another about it. They told me to go talk to her, so I did. It was a really surreal conversation because she asked me a lot of questions about how much reading I did, which was a lot. Then she asked me if I read the newspaper, which I said I did, but I said there was a lot of stuff I didn't understand, and didn't particularly want to understand.

Reti: Now when you say you were doing a lot of reading, what kind of reading?

Blumenthal: Mostly fiction. But I did read the newspaper. But there were whole areas of—and she asked me why, so I went into a long riff about I just didn't understand all of the newly emerging African countries, and all the names of the leaders, and this was just complete gibberish to me. I think I must have turned her off, because I didn't get placed in the advanced placement classes. (laughs) That was fine. It was what it was. But I basically found things to be really easy.

I joined a few clubs. I joined the math club; I joined the Spanish club. I think I was the vice president of the Spanish club one year. But I wasn't particularly a student leader.

Reti: I was wondering. I was going to ask you that.

Blumenthal: No. I did a lot of work, as I said, in the counseling office. But again, I think I ran for president of the Spanish club and lost. But I deferred from being the head of the counseling interns, or whatever they were called, because there was a woman student there who used to bug the hell out of me. Actually, thinking back on it, it was interesting. She was very quiet. She was a volunteer. I didn't know her that well. But she had a 4.0. She was one of the people who graduated with a 4.0 and her intention was to go to secretarial school.

Reti: Oh!

Blumenthal: I was really offended by that. I remember talking to her once, trying to persuade her to do something different. And she was very determined that's what she was going to do with her life. So when the time came, I thought she should be the person who was in charge of the counseling center because I figured she wasn't going to have a life.

Reti: Did you have any consciousness of limitations on women's opportunities at that point?

Blumenthal: Not overtly. Not consciously, but certainly subconsciously, because remember, my mother worked, so I was a latchkey kid. To me, it was the most natural thing in the world that one's mother worked. Secondly, in our family, my mother was clearly in some ways the leader, or the most intelligent person in the family. She was the intellectual leader of the family. She helped the kids with homework. She was the one who challenged us to do things. She taught me to do mental math. So it just seemed the most natural thing in the world that women would do these things. Did I think about it? No, I probably didn't. But certainly, I lived it. I do remember feeling about this young woman, whose name I don't even remember anymore, like she was going to have so little in her life if she went to secretarial school, for someone who's so bright. It was so frustrating talking to her. I still remember that conversation. It was so uncomfortable—

I should say to you that the person I am today is not the person I was in high school, or even as a young faculty member. We'll come back to that later. But I was very shy, very retiring. For me to have that kind of a conversation with somebody was unbelievably uncomfortable. Today it wouldn't be a big deal. But back then, it was not easy. This wasn't a young woman I had feelings for, but it just struck me as wrong, what she was doing.

So what else? I'll come back to this probably later, again—but all my life, I've had a love/hate relationship with the subject of history. I had two courses in history. One of them I loved, taught by a teacher by the name of Ewing, who I thought was great because she raised issues about why people did things. She was all about the *why*. Then I had this course in history from another teacher named Wolf, who was horrible because we had to memorize the dates of every battle, or every event. I thought it was extremely intellectually stifling. I hated it. And it sort of led to a long—all through college I was never a great aficionado of history. But when I got to graduate school I started reading history books. I developed a love of history that I just couldn't abide when I was in high school.

Reti: A lot of people were traumatized by that method of teaching history. It's very unfortunate.

Blumenthal: Math, I was always really good in. There was no question I was maybe the top student in the school in math. In tenth grade when we studied the Pythagorean Theorem, I came up with an alternative proof of the Pythagorean Theorem, much shorter than the one presented to me. I was very proud of it and I showed it to the teacher. Basically, at the end of the day, she correctly pointed out there were a hundred proofs of the Pythagorean Theorem, so this wasn't, in some ways, such a unique thing.

Reti: Still, you were in high school. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I was in *high school*. Yeah, that's right, and I was trying to do something original—

Reti: Yeah, that's pretty amazing.

Blumenthal: —or something a little different. I had a sense that it was easier to do than the books portrayed it as. So I didn't have great math teachers in high school, but they

were okay. I remember one math teacher, I went and I wanted to ask him a bunch of questions sort of to expand on what he was talking about. He wouldn't go there. I don't think he had the intellectual capability of doing it. I felt kind of guilty for even asking him the questions. On the other hand, there was another math teacher who, when we were seniors, gave some after-school lectures on calculus, and I really appreciated that. So math was interesting and good.

I took chemistry in eleventh grade. The first semester, I did fine. And then sometime in the spring they gave a test to all students in Wisconsin on chemistry. I don't know why, but I decided if I had to take this test, I ought to at least study the rest of the book. So I decided to read the rest of the book ahead of covering it. So I did, and I took this test. I ended up getting one of the top scores in the state. So suddenly, even though they didn't want me in advanced classes, they realized that maybe that was a mistake.

But where I really developed a love was in physics. To me, physics was so much more fun than chemistry because physics is the application of mathematics to the real world and I was really good at math. I remember one time one of my high school math teachers had strongly encouraged me to do something with my math skills, so she suggested that my career of choice should be an actuary. I didn't even know what the hell an actuary was. But I looked it up, and the thought of it was so depressing that—(laughter)

Reti: Thank God you didn't go down that road.

Blumenthal: But in physics, I found the applications of math that really gave them meaning. I loved physics. I really, really loved it. I had two different instructors for physics, for the two semesters. It was eye-opening to me. It was so easy, so much fun. I know a lot of people have trouble with it, but to me it just flowed in. I felt like once I had taken that class, I knew what my future was. I was really, really pleased.

In fact, one of my high school physics instructors, his name was Pirie, he did me a great favor. I came from a very working class type background, and my parents were concerned about getting jobs when their kids finished college. I thought well, what should I go to college and major in? I decided the right thing to major in was nuclear engineering. It sounded hot. It sounded like this was going to be the future. This was the early '60s. They were building nuclear plants all over the place, so I thought, this would be a great thing to do: lots of jobs, a great future career.

I mentioned this to Mr. Pirie. He said, "This is a bad idea. Look," he said, "you should major in physics. If you major in physics and you want to do nuclear engineering, no problem. You'll have the background to do it. It's an easy transition to make. But if you major in nuclear engineering, you will never be able to go back and be a physicist, or go into some other area of physics." It was advice that I took seriously. Frankly, over the years, I have repeated that advice in slightly different forms to literally scores of students: try to stay general, and don't get too specific too fast. I remember that as one of the most important moments of my life, when he gave me that advice, because it was so, so right.

Now, I'll be honest with you, I wanted to major in engineering in college because at least at the University of Wisconsin in those days, if you were a letters and science major, you had to take five semesters of English composition and literature. If you were an engineering student, you had to take two semesters. I really liked the idea of two semesters versus five semesters, but I also realized that that was maybe not the right reason to make a career choice.

Since I mentioned English, I think it's important to mention that in eleventh grade English, I had a really, really tough teacher. Her name was Miss Gardener. Sometimes I felt like the only words that ever came out of her mouth were "logic" and "order." Those

were her bywords. (Reti laughs) She was really tough and really demanding and I only got a B in her class. There were some things I resented about her class, like when we read literature from England, we had to learn how people dressed during different eras, which I thought was stupid. I resented having to do that, and maybe I didn't do that. But I liked the fact that she really emphasized good writing skills. I learned to write under her instruction. She taught me to write in a way that didn't involve making grammatical errors. I rarely make grammatical errors. I write in a way that there is a logic to it.

It stuck with me to this day. When I sit down and write something, theoretically I could write an outline and go from there. But usually, if it's not too long, I can just do the outline in my head and stick to the outline and it makes sense. And there is a logical order. There's a beginning, middle and end. I credit her with having taught me to do that.

In fact, skipping forward a number of years, after college when I was in graduate school, when I wrote my first paper, just kind of on a lark, I sent her a copy of my first paper, which was, of course, a technical paper. I said, "I appreciated what you have done for me, but I want to know whether or not this paper satisfies your desire for logic and order." She wrote back a nice little note. "Yes," she said, "but I did find a grammatical error." (laughter)

Reti: Oh, gosh. That's amazing, actually, that she made it through a very technical paper to *find* that error.

Blumenthal: That's true. I had no reason to believe she even remembered me. I was hardly the outstanding student of her dreams, but she certainly had a huge influence on me.

Of course, I had friends in high school. But one friend particularly is worth noting, a guy named Tom Rieger, who was also interested in physics. I didn't know him that well in

high school. We knew each other to talk to, but we didn't know each other very well. But we went to college together. He also majored in physics. We became lifelong friends until his death probably close to ten years ago. But he had a major influence on me in college.

In high school, I worked. A lot of what I did was babysitting, strange though that may sound. (laughs) I did work for my parents throughout this time, but I also babysat for a lot of families in the neighborhood, particularly our next-door neighbors, the one who I told you about, where the husband was the station manager for the equivalent of KQED in Milwaukee. His wife was in drama, so she acted in plays. So they were sort of an avant-garde couple. While they lived next to us, they adopted two children. I ended up babysitting for them a lot. They went out a lot and I was their babysitter of choice. It was really interesting to babysit for them because they were so different than my parents. I remember babysitting for them on election night in 1960. That's when Kennedy was elected president. They were going to a Kennedy party. I remember being struck by, kind of taken aback by it. I wasn't very political at that point, but nevertheless, my parents were strong Nixon supporters. So they expanded my horizons, not, I don't even think, consciously. But just being exposed to someone who is from a more avant-garde perspective was eye-opening and helpful to me.

But in my family, there was an expectation that we would go to college. There was never any doubt about it. I think I've mentioned my sister had already gone to college.

Reti: Yes, you did.

Blumenthal: She had gone to UWM [University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]. By the time I started college, which was at seventeen, she was already married and had finished four years of college, but hadn't graduated yet. She got married when I was sixteen. Then when I was seventeen, she had her first child. I think she stopped going at that point. She did

work occasionally as a substitute teacher, but she didn't actually have her degree until much later. I was in graduate school when she got her degree. She got her degree in an interesting way. As I told you earlier, she couldn't pass a course in physics. But they changed the requirements for graduation at some point and suddenly she had the credits and all the requirements. So she applied for the degree and got it. She's very smart in many ways, but like many people, she had her hang-ups.

All right. So I think that gets us through high school. High school was the last of the graduations that I ever attended for myself.

Reti: Interesting.

Attending the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Blumenthal: So then it was time to start college.

Reti: And there was no question in terms of where you would go to college.

Blumenthal: I only applied to one place.

Reti: That you would only go in-state, yeah.

Blumenthal: The University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. When I was younger, my parents had talked about maybe I should go to Marquette; Annette, my sister, and I, should go to Marquette because that was the only other major college in Milwaukee until UWM came into being. But my sister had already gone to UWM. It was a legitimate enough place. I was so ignorant. I wasn't aware that I could apply for scholarships elsewhere. Probably had I known that, I would have. I would have loved to get out of Milwaukee but it never crossed my mind that there was a practical way to do it. I was so naïve, I thought the only scholarships to college were football scholarships.

Reti: Well, you know, being first generation, your family didn't go to college; you didn't have parents who were saying things like that from experience. And I guess there weren't high school counselors who were encouraging that.

Blumenthal: I'm not even sure I ever talked to a high school counselor, even though I worked in the counseling office. It's just, if you don't ever think to ask the question, you'll never get the answer.

So I started at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. The plan was, when I started, that I would go there for two years and then transfer to Madison, and then I'd spend two years in Madison. That was my intention when I started.

I actually started in summer school. I decided once I graduated, what the hell, why not just get a head start? So I went to summer school that first summer and I took two classes. I decided, since I was going to have to take freshman English, and everybody hated freshman English, I would just start in summer school, and then take a class in German. I thought I'd learn another language. I'd already decided I wanted to be a scientist. German was the language of science, so I decided if I studied German, that would be a really smart thing to do. It wasn't a bad decision for the moment, but it was a bad decision for the long run, because well, I guess if you don't mind my skipping ahead a little bit, it's interesting—

So I learned college German and high school Spanish. I had two languages, which served me well when I went to get my PhD because you had to have two languages, at least, in those days. German was supposedly the language of science. But in fact, German was becoming less and less important over time, because Germany wasn't the scientific powerhouse in the sixties or seventies that it was in the thirties. And journals were translated. In fact, throughout my entire scientific career, the only time I ever really had

to read a paper in another language, that it was important for me to read that paper, it was in Italian. Fortunately, I shared an office at the time in graduate school with a guy from Italy, so he helped me with the translation.

It would have been better to think about languages that would be more useful in terms of traveling. If I had it to do all over again, it would have been Chinese and Russian. In those days, they didn't teach Chinese in the schools, because who would ever want to learn Chinese in those days? But those would have been better choices.

Anyway, people make their choices. So I took that in summer school. The German class was fine. I learned a lot, and the class had a good teacher. The English class was interesting. It was a transformative experience. Ostensibly, the course was about how to write, basically. All frosh had to take it. It was the class that they used to flunk out students. In those days, the University of Wisconsin system had to accept all applicants with high school diplomas in Wisconsin. They needed a mechanism to flunk out the students who shouldn't be there, and freshman English was one of the mechanisms that they used. So there was a lot of writing. The course that I took was taught by a guy, he was an instructor; I think he had a master's degree. I think he was very interested in philosophy because he talked about it a lot. They made us read a bunch of essays, and they made us write a bunch of essays, and that's what we were graded on.

I was a technically very competent writer, so when I submitted essays, they did not come back with red markings on them, showing grammatical errors. But I had a friend in the class, a very nice guy, and I would have said to you, just naively at the time, a smart guy, but not as smart as I am. I'd almost never say those words, I might not even think those words, but that would have been my assessment at the time. And yet, every week we'd have to turn in an essay; I'd turn in my essay; it would come back pristine, with a nice,

solid B. And he would turn in his essay and it would come back red all over with all the mistakes he made, and he'd be getting A's. This would happen week after week. He'd get A's for his essays that were so clearly not written well grammatically. I'd write these pristinely correct essays, and I'd get B's.

So finally I asked him if I could read a couple of his essays. He let me, and I read them. I had this sudden realization. His essays were interesting. They had something to say. I enjoyed reading them. They weren't just some dry drivel about some topic. It was actually interesting. He would come up with a thesis that was interesting, and then defend or put forward the thesis. For me, that was transformative, that realization that being technically competent was not enough. It wasn't even first base. What you really needed to do was to have something to say, and then it didn't matter so much how you said it. It's so obvious, but at the time, for me, it was eye-opening. It was transformative to understand that, and to know that. So when I think about classes I took in college, probably that is the class that had the most influence on me, even though it's probably the class I least wanted to take. So that was an important experience.

When I talk to students today about going to college—to me, and I think to many people—going to college, in part it's a holistic experience, but in part, it's a series of a few individual experiences that are so transformative of the way you think that they affect you for the rest of your life. Anyway, that was my experience.

Then, when the summer was over, I started regular classes. The first semester was awkward because I had gone to summer school, and therefore I had to register after all of the other incoming frosh, which meant I couldn't get the classes that I wanted. But somehow, I managed. I think I took chemistry and calculus. I took calculus with my friend

Tom, who I mentioned already. Chemistry was all right. It didn't excite me, but I was okay with it. But the calculus was extremely easy.

Tom and I went to the lectures together. But they always had two different venues for the class. It was like three lectures and two discussion sections each week. So we went to the first discussion section and it was taught by a teaching assistant from, I think, Sri Lanka, a very nice guy. I had a lot of trouble understanding anything he said. If you haven't been exposed to a lot of people with foreign accents, it takes you a while to hone in on their accent. That was certainly describing me.

But anyway, I didn't need the discussion section, nor did Tom. We made a pact that we would not ever attend discussion sections. So we didn't. We would just go into the Student Union and hang out during section. Until the midterm. When we took the midterm, they announced that the midterms would be returned at our discussion section. So we had to go. So Tom and I made an agreement. We would go to the discussion section and we would get our exams back. If we both did really, really well, we would find an unobtrusive moment to sneak out. (Reti laughs)

So we went to the section. We got there early. I carefully put a wastebasket in front of the door, so the door would stay open. The instructor came in. I remember he was called M.S., was his name, because presumably his name was so unpronounceable by mere mortals. He started handing back the exams. Ours were the first two exams he handed out. We both got perfect scores. He's walking around the class handing out exams, but when he walked in, he had kicked the wastebasket away from the door, so it closed. So I looked at Tom and Tom looked at me. We nodded at each other. We got up and we went to the door. I opened the door; he thought I opened it for him; I had actually opened it for me. So we

both went through at the same time. And my friend Tom was, how can I say it, was somewhat rotund in his body type. So we got stuck in the door.

Reti: Oh, God! (laughs)

Blumenthal: The whole class is roaring with laughter. Meanwhile, M.S. is still in the back of the room, handing out exams. He didn't notice anything. We're stuck there. Finally, in desperation we surge forward. Tom ripped his pants on the door jamb, and we got out of there. We heard later from somebody in the class that when he'd handed out the exams he started going through the exams in class, he said, "You know, there's only two people in this class that got this question right. Would one of them care to explain?" (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Oh, God. That's great. I can picture all of that so well.

Blumenthal: Anyway, so that was a very, very easy class. Then the second semester, I was able to take my first physics class. That's how you started the sequence, at least in those days in Wisconsin. You started it after you'd already had one semester of calculus. I loved the physics. It was great. I hate to say, it was just so easy that I just loved it. I was not very good in the lab. But I did really well and it was clear they were recognizing that I did well. So I made sure that I took a lot of physics and math classes throughout college, and the department later awarded me their top student award.

But after I'd come out of calculus class one day, I went to the Student Union, which was my usual mode. There was this talk on the PA system, and I thought what's going on? Was another rocket launched? But, in fact, they were announcing the assassination of President Kennedy. That was a rather devastating experience, as I'm sure it was for most Americans at the time. I decided to just leave and go home. People were crying on the bus as I took the bus home. The university was located on the far east side of Milwaukee, near

Lake Michigan, just a few blocks from Lake Michigan, whereas our house was way over on the west side of town. So it was probably an hour's bus ride each way. So yeah, it was really quite devastating. You're too young to remember that.

Reti: I was only two.

Blumenthal: But it was an experience watching that, watching on TV the funeral, the son who saluted his father as he came by. And then, I was watching TV live when Jack Ruby shot Lee Harvey Oswald. It was on live TV. It was an amazing time. Just completely devastating.

Reti: Yeah. And your politics by that point?

Blumenthal: Still probably pretty conservative. I was not a great fan of Kennedy's. I liked the Camelot aspect of Kennedy; I didn't particularly like his politics. On the other hand, I also felt he hadn't accomplished a whole lot as president. Yes, there was the missile crisis. But there was also the Bay of Pigs. There was the integration of high schools in the South. But even there, it felt like he wasn't acting nearly as decisively as I thought he might.

Reti: Mm hmm. So you were following the civil rights movement.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. I was strongly supportive of the civil rights movement in those days. Very much so. During those years, one of my heroes was Julian Bond.

I first became aware of Julian Bond when he ran for and was elected a state senator in Georgia and the Georgia legislature decided not to seat him because he had come out against the war in Vietnam. So even though I was in favor, at that point in my life, of the war in Vietnam, or at least passively in favor of it, I felt that it was so fundamentally wrong

for a state in the South to refuse to seat a democratically elected official just because of views that he expressed about a national issue.

Reti: Wow. That's amazing.

Blumenthal: Julian Bond would not take this lying down. He ended up suing, and the suit ultimately, I think went to the Supreme Court and they forced the Georgia legislature to seat him. Of course, he became a well-known civil rights leader. Late in life he became the head of the NAACP, became a law professor. If you asked me what are my highlights as chancellor, I think one of my highlights in my life as chancellor was when Julian came [to UC Santa Cruz] to give the Martin Luther King, Junior Convocation maybe six or seven years ago.⁷ He came with his wife. His wife, it turns out, is a law professor. Kelly and I had dinner with them and it was just so awesome. He's such a nice guy, such a sweet man, such an intelligent man. I felt a sense of hero worship, being with him. Unfortunately, he passed away a couple of years ago. But he was a delightful person, and as I say, for me, he was a boyhood hero. Or if not boyhood, early manhood hero. I liked the way that he had stood up for himself. It appealed to me. And of course, I was a supporter of the civil rights movement.

Reti: Were you able to tell him that?

Blumenthal: I did.

Reti: Oh, that's wonderful.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. I think he was a little embarrassed. But it was absolutely true. I remember all of those details of the early life of his because it made such an impression on me of how completely inappropriate it was to deny him his seat.

But getting back to Kennedy, it was a devastating time, the assassination.

And male college students at public universities around the country had to take ROTC.

Reti: Oh!

Blumenthal: It was a very frequent thing that it was required of students. Fortunately for me, by the time I got to college, all that we were required to do was to take ROTC orientation. I remember taking that during my first full semester. It was hilarious because we had to go to six hours of classes on ROTC to try to persuade us to do it. All I remember from those six hours was they showed us some movie with some guy literally up to his neck in mud, going through the mud, talking about what a rewarding experience it was— (laughter) I just couldn't understand why they would show a movie like that. So I was hardly induced to consider—I wouldn't have anyway. But in those days, you had to take the orientation. So a lot of people on campus would go around in uniforms if they had joined the ROTC.

Reti: Forgive my ignorance, George, but the draft, at that point, where were we? Was there a draft?

Blumenthal: Oh, there was a draft. Definitely.

Reti: Were you worried about that?

Blumenthal: I wasn't yet, because I had a student deferment.

Reti: Oh, right. As long as you were in school, you were okay.

Blumenthal: But we'll come back to that. In graduate school, it becomes a much bigger issue.

Reti: But the war in Vietnam was going on.

Blumenthal: The war had started, but we barely knew it. The war didn't escalate until after Lyndon Johnson became president. We were kind of doing police actions during Kennedy's time. But what was interesting during Kennedy's time, that was when the assassination of Ngô Đình Diệm took place. Apparently, Kennedy was complicit in that assassination, although I'm not sure we knew it at the time. But it was clear there was great instability there. We were backing a regime that didn't seem to have a lot of popular support. That much was clear. And those were the years when General Westmoreland would be on TV every six months, when he'd come back to the US, saying, "Oh, victory is just around the corner in Vietnam." But in those days, I would have described myself as a supporter, when I was in college. It was my country; I supported what my country was doing. Simple as that. Again, that changed.

All right. Moving right along. So I took a lot of physics and math classes. But I took what I had to take in other things. By the time I graduated, I had a major in physics and I was one course short of a major in math. I graduated with 120 credits, exactly, which was what you needed. So that meant that I had, I guess 43 credits in things other than physics and math, total. Just over a third of my credits were that.

But you did have to take American history. They allowed you to satisfy an American history requirement by taking one of the upper-division or graduate classes in history, and coupling that with a course in social science. So I took a course in economics. In fact, I even took a second course in economics because I liked it so well. Then I took a course in the economic history of the United States. That course was transformative for me as well. It sounds sort of silly now, but in that class the professor would raise issues that were kind of counter-morality. I'll give you an example. He pointed out that the robber barons were responsible for the economic development of the western United States, and that the US would never have developed to be as strong economically as we did as a country, but

for the fact that we were robbed blind by the railroad barons who built the railroad. His point was we needed the railroad to get the economic advantages that come with the size of the country, but on the other hand, the barons got very rich, inappropriately rich, by doing so. I took issue with him about the moral question. I had an interesting discussion with him in class about that. He was almost dismissive of what I was saying. But he made me realize that when you think about issues, not only are there two sides, but there are unintended consequences. There are ways of looking at issues that are completely different. If you had asked me would I condone somebody robbing the country blind in order to get these rights of ways, blah, blah, blah, I'd say of course not, that's a horrible thing. But if you framed the same question as: would you support paying an inappropriate amount of money to people in order to develop something that will develop the country and make the country great? That's a completely different way of framing exactly the same question. It was in that class that I learned, or came to appreciate the different ways you could frame looking at a given situation. I've always been very grateful to him for that class. I was very naïve in those days. I really was.

Oh, yeah, well, (laughs) another course I should discuss is American literature. So besides having to take three composition courses. I took American literature. It was a very interesting experience as well, very eye-opening, not quite as much as some of the other classes. I mentioned that I couldn't get a good schedule, because the first semester I registered after all the other incoming students, so I had to take what I could get. It turns out that in those days, the University of Wisconsin registration for continuing students was based upon grade point average. So, you know, the rich get richer. I was always in the first group that registered. So from then on out, I always got whatever I wanted. But that first semester was difficult. I ended up with a 7:30 a.m. class in American literature.

Reti: (laughs) We don't even do that here.

Blumenthal: We don't even do that here. But we did it there. I had to take a bus for an hour across town to get there. And in those days, there would be at least two weeks of twenty below zero weather in Milwaukee. So we're talking cold. I really struggled to get there on time for this class. It was the only one I could get into, so I had to take that particular class. I got there and I'm waiting for the instructor. And there was a guy there who was an army veteran. He'd gone back to school on the GI Bill and I was chatting with him. He said he had had another class from the same instructor and he had signed up for this class. I said, "That's fantastic. I am so happy to hear that, because this is going to be a good class."

So then the instructor came in, 7:30 in the morning, and he sat down. He was very droopy eyed, looked like he had just gotten out of bed. He was that way for the whole class. He spent the hour reading to us from critics' writings about the authors that were in our book. That was basically what he did every day. After that first class, I turned to the guy, this veteran who had told me he signed up for the class because of the instructor. I said, "That was the worst class I've ever been in." And he said, "Well, that was the best class he ever taught." (laughter)

Reti: Oh, God.

Blumenthal: It was a miserable semester, but somehow I got through it.

Reti: Speaking of your commute across town, did they have dorms? Or was that even a question for you?

Blumenthal: They did have dorms. Not very many. It's really an urban campus, but they did have some dorms. They had bought a nearby campus. It was adjacent to the original campus. I think it was a woman's teachers' college of some sort. So there were some dorms there. But it was never a question for me, since that would have been too expensive. Yeah.

Commuting was an issue. I think it wasn't until my third year when I got a car. I carefully saved my money to do that. That made life a whole lot easier.

Why don't I jump to the library? So while I was in college, I decided that I wanted to get a regular job. So I took the civil service exam and I got a job. I don't know how much you know about civil service, but basically, when you take a civil service exam, the jobs go in the order of the examination results. My sister had done that, I think for the library system, when she was in college. So I figured what the hell, I would do it, too. But I'm really glad. It was really a useful, broadening experience for me. I took the civil service exam. I was very quickly called. I was one of the highest scores. I was placed in the Atkinson Public Library, which was situated right at the interface between a black neighborhood and a white neighborhood in Milwaukee, so it was a very integrated group of patrons. That was a really good experience. I stayed there for a year, and, probably a year and a third or so.

Reti: What kind of work were you doing there?

Blumenthal: Shelving books. Checking out books. You know, in those days, checking out books— you had to stamp a book and stamp a card. Figuring out fines and stuff like that. It was pretty menial work, but it paid reasonably and it was a job.

Reti: And this was full time?

Blumenthal: Oh, no, no. It was half time.

Reti: Okay. So it's while you were going to school. Half time.

Blumenthal: I did it twenty hours a week while I was going to school.

Reti: It's still a lot. Yeah.

Blumenthal: Well, yeah. And I took an overload each quarter, each semester, as well. But again, I didn't find it that hard. But anyway, for me it was a really important and good experience.

The very first day at work was a good example of a good experience, one that I thought about a lot. My direct boss, the librarian, who was overseeing the clerks, was a woman, Mrs. Park, and she was black. This was at a time when the black families who were in Milwaukee had made a decision to do the first of what turned out to be several boycotts of the schools. They were short-term boycotts, but they were meant to protest the fact that schools in black neighborhoods were so much worse than schools in other neighborhoods. I knew that the complaints were legitimate. There was no doubt in my mind. My sister had been substitute teaching, so I'd heard stories from her.

Then it had come out that the principal of my old high school—I have to jump back to high school for the moment—the principal of my high school, it turned out, we learned only after I had graduated, had manipulated the boundaries of the school district in such a way as to keep black families out of the high school. So even though the high school itself—remember I said it was a significant bus ride from home; it was kind of at an interface, or near an interface of a black neighborhood. It wasn't right at the interface. But you would have expected, under normal circumstances, to have a fairly substantial black population, a non-trivial black population, more than one or two black students. But in fact, that's all there were in the entire high school. The high school was 1800 students. It turned out he had manipulated the district lines in order to prevent black families from attending that high school. That became a scandal after I'd graduated. I'd known of the scandal by the time I started at the library, so I felt there were legitimate reasons for the boycott.

I remember, my first day of work in the library, she did a little intake interview of me and she mentioned this boycott in Milwaukee. She said she was really troubled because she wasn't sure what to do about her own children because she didn't know whether to send them to school or not to send them to school. She asked me what I thought. I was the last person in the world she should have asked. I said to her, "I think that the complaint is a legitimate one but I also don't think it's appropriate to let kids be the people who are on the forefront of fixing a problem that adults have made." That's what I said. I think today I would probably not have agreed with that. I would have said that they should be involved. And in fact, there were parts of the civil rights movement that were highly dependent on children being at the forefront of the civil rights movement. I wasn't sophisticated enough to appreciate that.

But she was a great boss, and I really came to like her. I also learned something about bias and unconscious bias. Well, just some practical lessons working there. One memory that I have which has always stayed with me was a bunch of the clerks or student workers, student workers and full-time workers—who were not librarians, were talking one day and somebody mentioned something about the fact that Mrs. Park was black. I remember one young woman said, "What are you talking about? Mrs. Park isn't black." But of course, she *was* black. That comment really meant: how could she possibly be black? She's such a nice person. You know what I mean?

Reti: Yeah. She's smart and she's in a position of authority.

Blumenthal: Right. Exactly. Professional. It brought home to me that there is subconscious bias. I most certainly could not have used those words to describe it at that time, but I came to understand the concept when that happened. It was a very important moment in my life.

So anyway, I worked there. I enjoyed it. In many ways, it was a great way to earn money. It was a great way to develop more social skills. I was not very socially skilled. I had to deal with the public, I had to deal with coworkers, all of whom—I mean, at my level, they were all women. So for me, it was a good thing socially to have done this. And it also earned me some money. That's how I saved up money to buy a car. And the other thing I did, which I guess I must have only really started after I'd gotten my car, was in the winter I would go around and I would dig people out of snowbanks. They would be so grateful, they would usually pay me far more than the labor was worth. (laughter) So that was another way I earned money in those days.

Now let me transition back to physics. One of the problems with the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee was they were a relatively new physics department. They had some holdovers who were old-time faculty from the state teachers college days. And then they had some newer faculty who were hired with the idea that they were going to be a major research university. So it was kind of a split, and the curriculum reflected this as well. There were courses that I would describe as not really being courses for a university prepping people to go to graduate school, but there were other courses which were as good as anywhere you could go.

Well, I was really very lucky because one of the faculty there—an assistant professor—his name was Bud Morin—he recognized that deficiency in the curriculum, so he offered to my friend Tom, and me, and a third guy, that he would give us a special course on quantum physics because there was nothing in the curriculum on quantum physics that would be at an appropriate level for someone intending to go to graduate school. So we did that. We took that as a reading course from him. He spent a lot of time with us. We actually went through this—you wouldn't know the book—it's an old quantum physics book written by a guy called [Albert] Messiah. But it was quite sophisticated. It was far

more sophisticated than you would normally give, even as a university prep course. We benefited greatly by going through that in agonizingly great detail. I'm immensely thankful to Bud for having done that. It was very much above and beyond.

We did that for another course as well in mechanics. There we did it slightly differently. I remember there was a teacher's prep course in mechanics that—

Reti: Quantum mechanics, you're talking about?

Blumenthal: No, it was classical mechanics. It was offered by one of the instructors, a nice guy, who I knew slightly. It was so simple. There was sort of an agreement made that Tom and I would take the final exam, but that nobody expected us to do anything else. So I never showed up at the class. But I did show up the last day of class, where one of the other students in the class made a point of introducing me to the instructor. (laughter) He was cool about it, though, because he knew what was happening. So they were quite flexible in terms of doing things curricularly to make sure that we were well prepared to go to graduate school. I'm really grateful to them for that. I think it led to a good experience.

One of the courses that was required was a course in advanced laboratory techniques in physics. And what you should know about me is I have no laboratory skills. (Reti laughs) None, whatsoever. I'm not even embarrassed by it, particularly. I'm very much a theorist. They had us doing some fairly sophisticated experiments in that laboratory class. But in one of the early experiments we had some circuit that I was putting together for my experiment. I don't even know what I did—

Reti: Uh-oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: —but what I do remember is they had these resistors that you could plug things into to change the resistance. And at a certain point, smoke started coming out.

Reti: (laughs) I love it.

Blumenthal: It was totally unintentional. I was really not very good at these things. So the instructor, who was the same guy who taught mechanics, Mr. Jaggar, very nicely took me aside. He said, “Look, I’d like you to do a special project.” He said, “We just bought this analog computer in the department. But nobody knows how to make it run. So why don’t you make it your semester-long project to take this analog computer, read up on it, figure it out, and figure out how to put it together and make it work.” So that’s what I did.

Reti: Now, how big was this thing?

Blumenthal: Just a tabletop— It’s not like a digital computer, which were getting quite big in those days. An analog computer is something that mimics the results. It’s an electric circuit. You change the circuit to solve the problem you want to solve. Let’s say you have an equation you want to solve. What you do is you make a circuit whose equation governing the circuit is the same as the equation you want to solve.

Reti: Okay. I didn’t know that.

Blumenthal: So I spent the semester basically putting together that analog computer and testing it out, which was fun, interesting, stimulating. I think Mr. Jaggar was just so right. This was something I could do, whereas if he’d just left me on the experiments, I would have ruined even more equipment.

Reti: (laughs) Small fires might have resulted, right?

Blumenthal: That’s right. I’m sorry, I just wasn’t that good.

Reti: That's a great teacher, who could recognize that.

Research as an Undergraduate: Sun Pillars

Blumenthal: By the end of my second full year, I must have impressed some people because I was approached then by a faculty member named Bob Greenler, who probably more than anyone else changed my life. He was a faculty member in physics. He was an experimental physicist. He approached me and asked me if I wanted to work with him on a project. He said he'd heard good things about me.

So I said yes. I quit my job at the library and I went to work with Bob. Bob was a surface physicist, so he did experiments to study the surfaces of materials. It turns out there's interesting physics that takes place on surfaces. So he had all this infrared equipment to bounce signals off of surfaces and measure results and stuff. He had had somebody create this big computer program to analyze theoretically what was happening when he bounced infrared radiation off of surfaces. What he wanted me to do was to run that program under different circumstances. I was perfectly happy to do it.

Now in those days, just to back up for a second—you know, today if you want to write a computer program, you go on your terminal, or your computer; you write the program, and either your computer or some other computer will run it for you, and you're done. It's one, two, three. In those days, you ran computer programs by writing one line of code on each card that would be fed into a card reader. It was one line of code per card.

Reti: Was that a punch card?

Blumenthal: It was a punch card.

Reti: I remember those.

Blumenthal: That's how I learned to program computers. I learned Fortran. I think I learned Fortran, by the way, in a laboratory in physics. I never took a course. We were in a lab; we were told to learn Fortran, so we just learned it. It wasn't that hard to do. And if you wanted to run a computer program, you had to first punch up your cards, put them in a stack, take it over to the computer center, give it to them. When they had time, they would run it. Then they would give you back the results. It might take a few hours. And if you make a mistake, like you mistype something, or there's an error in your computer program, of course it won't run. It will just give you an error message. You've got to go fix it. So it's a great way to learn to be very efficient in programming because you *really* don't want to make mistakes. Of course, you will make mistakes, but you want to minimize the number of mistakes you make because it's so time-consuming to get error messages and try to figure it all out, especially with computer cards.

So anyway, he had this huge stack, probably two feet tall, of cards, that was this big program which mimicked what happened when infrared radiation was reflecting off of surfaces. So I spent a month or so doing that, maybe more. It was really, really boring. (Reti laughs) But you know, it was in physics, etcetera. But it was just not that interesting. I was kind of a minion doing work. I wasn't very happy, but I wasn't actively unhappy.

Then one day, I was just in his office chatting with him, and he mentioned that he was going to go outside because it was raining, and he wanted to take an infrared picture of a rainbow. He said no one had ever really published an infrared rainbow.

Reti: Huh.

Blumenthal: So we talked a little bit about the earth's atmosphere. He said there were all kinds of interesting atmospheric phenomena, none of which I had heard of. He mentioned sun dogs and sun pillars. Do you know what they are?

Reti: I know what a sun dog is. I don't know what a sun pillar is.

Blumenthal: So a sun pillar—when the sun is very near the horizon, either at dawn or at dusk, and if there's just the right kind of clouds in the sky, you see a pillar of light coming out of the sun. You see it very rarely in California, because the conditions aren't right here. But you will see it elsewhere. You might see it at dawn, if there's not mountains to the east. Anyway, he mentioned sun pillars. So I said to him, "What's a sun pillar?" He explained that. Then I said, "So, what causes a sun pillar?" He explained that as well. So I said to him, "That's got to be wrong."

He said, "What do you mean it's wrong?"

I said, "That cannot be the right explanation." I tried to explain to him why it couldn't possibly be right. The explanation had to do with reflection off of ice crystals but in a really funny way that I didn't see how it could produce a sun pillar.

He kept insisting it was right. Finally, he got a little exasperated and he pulled down a book from his bookshelf. It was a book by Minnaert. It turns out Dr. Minnaert was the world's leading expert on atmospheric optical phenomena. There was a big section in there on sun pillars. He finds that section and he's reading it to me, and as he was reading it to me, his words started slowing down and became halting as he realized that the explanation was wrong for just the reasons that I had mentioned. We concluded that there was no good explanation of sun pillars. So he said to me, "Well, would you like to work on this? Would you like to figure out what the correct explanation is instead of running that computer program?" (laughter)

I said sure. So in fact, I did. It was really exciting. I developed a couple of models for how sun pillars might work. I wrote a computer program to model it. I ran the model. I tested

it against pictures of sun pillars, and ultimately came up with a model of how sun pillars had to work.

I updated him along the way, what I was doing. But at a certain point, I felt like I had solved the problem. So I went to see him, and I showed him the work. I explained to him what I had done and why I thought this was a good model. I will never forget what he said to me. He said, “This has got to be right. This makes complete sense.” He said, “Do you realize that at this moment in time, you and I are the only two people in the world who understand sun pillars?”

Reti: Wow. Cool.

Blumenthal: And I don’t know, for me, as this little kid from Milwaukee who wasn’t very worldly, that was such a heady experience to hear that, to come to realize that I understood something that no one else understood. And that I had done it.

Reti: Fantastic.

Blumenthal: That was transformative. That gave me an appreciation of research, and the high you get from doing research, that I would not otherwise have had. So again, another transformative experience.

Reti: Well, something else strikes me about what you’re saying, which is that you had the confidence as this kid from Milwaukee to question something your teacher was saying to you. And he had the wisdom as a teacher to encourage that.

Blumenthal: Exactly.

Reti: Those are both remarkable events.

Blumenthal: That's right. That's right. No, he is a remarkable man, still is a remarkable man. Absolutely.

Again, let me just jump forward by about ten years now or something. Many years later, not long after I came to UC Santa Cruz, I wrote a paper on the Poynting-Robertson effect. Doesn't matter what that is at the moment. But it was an effect that was first identified around the turn of the century, 1900. I decided I wanted to go read the original paper for the Poynting-Robertson effect. I went to the McHenry Library, where they had the stacks of the old, old journals. And it turns out, McHenry has the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. So I found the paper and I either read it or Xeroxed it. But since I was in the stacks with the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, I picked up a few random volumes from much earlier. One was from the 1700s. I was paging through it, just for the hell of it and I saw a letter in there from a clergyman who said that as he was walking home over the moors or wherever, at sunset, he noticed a pillar of light coming out of the sun. He described it in great detail. It was obvious that it was a sun pillar from his description. So I wrote a letter to Bob Greenler, this professor, a reference to that letter, and said, "I think I have found the earliest known reference to a sun pillar." He wrote back and said, "Well, I'm sorry to one-up you, but when I was in Italy last year visiting—" I forget which museum, he said, "I saw a painting by—" again, one of the old masters. And he said, "Within that painting was a picture of a sun pillar." So he gave me the reference. (laughs)

Reti: Very cool. That brings together history and astronomy and physics.

Blumenthal: For me, the sun pillar episode was transformative. We later published it.⁸ It was really cool. It gave me this appreciation of research that I wouldn't have had

otherwise. Otherwise, research would have just been some abstract concept. I realized the high you could get from doing research.

Applying to Graduate School

So I did well as a physics student and eventually I started thinking about graduate school. That was an interesting phenomenon, too because when I entered college, the idea of going to graduate school was simply not in my thought processes. My idea was I would go to college, get some remunerative job somewhere, and live happily ever after. That was certainly my parents' expectation. When I was in college, another friend—his name was Arthur Knopf—talked all the time about wanting to go to grad school and getting a doctoral degree. At first I said, *why* would you do that? (laughs)

Reti: Because at that time, was it possible to get a job in science with just a BS?

Blumenthal: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

Reti: That's a different time than we're living in now.

Blumenthal: It was a different era. He had this aspiration to get a doctoral degree because it had such great prestige associated with it. I didn't particularly care about prestige, but I was certainly fascinated by the notion that you could do more after getting your degree.

So slowly, by osmosis, I evolved into the idea that I wanted to go to graduate school. Tom, my other friend, was certainly deciding to go to grad school, as well, in physics. So my desire to go to grad school was more of a consequence of social interaction than it was an inner drive that I had to do this. In fact, there was resistance. My parents were not thrilled at the notion. I had some interesting discussions with my mother about the dangers of becoming a professional student. She was very concerned I would go to graduate school

and end up without a saleable profession. I guess she had a friend whose son went to graduate school in studying bugs, and ended up driving a truck, or something. I'm vague on the story. But certainly, that was her fear. The *fear* was real. Whether or not it was practical or not, that was her main fear. The concept of the professional student—it's interesting, I mean, later on, I'm jumping way farther ahead, my wife got a PhD, and then went and got a law degree. So she certainly outdid me in terms of being a long-term student.

But anyway, I was certainly thinking about graduate school. I was about as naïve about graduate schools as I had been about undergraduate schools. But I knew a couple of things. I knew I needed to take the Graduate Record Exam. I was way too naïve to even imagine that you had to study for the GRE. I don't even know if they had courses in those days, but I certainly had no idea that there were potentially courses. So I went and took the GRE exam. I guess it's still the same today—there's a general, verbal; there's a computational; and then there's a subject. I did the subject in physics. I remember taking it at Marquette University because I remember being a little bit annoyed by the crosses and the Jesuses on the wall, but I got over it.

It was an interesting exam because in the physics section, I just sat down and I started with question one, and I worked through all of the answers. It was clear after a while that I wasn't going to have enough time to finish the exam. First of all, I'm not the fastest calculator in the world. I usually prefer accuracy to speed. And secondly, the exam is consciously intended to be long. I remember at a certain point I started getting desperate because I knew I wasn't going to finish. I was debating whether to make guesses or not. I got to a horrible question, which was a question where they had some string hanging from a wall with a spring and a bar and it was rotating and bouncing. They wanted to know what the frequency of the bouncing was. It was a question that I could have solved, but it

was clearly going to take me a long time to solve it. So I said, I'm going to go look at the answers and see if any of them strike me as likely to be—

Reti: Oh, because it was multiple choice.

Blumenthal: It was multiple choice. I looked at the answers and they were all symbolic answers in terms of variables, but I realized that of the five answers, only one of them had the right units. They were asking for frequency, and only one of them ultimately would have had the units of frequency. So it was clear what the answer was, without doing any work, which I greatly resented, because I felt like that was a trick question. But I got it right.

So anyway, the long and the short of it was I did well on the verbal. Not great, but well, maybe 85th percentile. I did great on the computational, 99. And I did great on the physics, in the 99th percentile. That's what really opened a lot of doors for me. So I'm sure, largely on the basis of letters of recommendation, and a publication and a 99 percent GRE, I was offered a National Science Foundation fellowship.

Reti: Wonderful.

Blumenthal: I forget how it worked in those days. I think a three-year fellowship paid both tuition and living expenses. And then it was potentially renewable, and I did get mine renewed for two more years, although I only used one-third of those renewals. It was a great thing to have. Suddenly all these graduate schools were interested in me because I had this fellowship and was bringing my own money, so to speak.

I also remember being really annoyed because I got a letter from my local congressman congratulating me on the fellowship and kind of implying that he had something to do with it. (laughter) But anyway, I got the fellowship.

Oh, I skipped something. I ended up not transferring to Madison. The reason I didn't transfer to Madison was at a certain point it became clear that I could graduate in three years if I wanted to. With the summer classes I had taken, with the overloads—I took 20, 21, 22 credits a semester. But I also remember, it was a bit sticky because—it's kind of funny now, looking at it from the standpoint of a university administrator—but as I was approaching the end of my third year, I realized that at the end of that semester, I would be three credits short of graduating. So my plan was to continue to work during the summer and take one three-unit class, and then have the credits needed to graduate. But unfortunately, I had some doubts about the number of legitimate credits on my transcript. In particular, I had taken more individual studies credits than you are allowed to by the university rules. That was one. Secondly, there was a course for which I had received three credits, for which I thought I was only supposed to get two. And, I had not gotten permission one semester—there was some rule that if you took more than twenty credits, you needed permission—and I had not gotten permission. So I was afraid my credits wouldn't count.

I didn't know what to do about this. So I went to the dean of letters and sciences—I'm sure this poor guy deals with all these problem people every day—I came in. I said, "I have this big problem." He probably thought all right. What is it, drugs? I said, "My problem is, that I've been so successful—" (laughs)

He said, "What's the big deal?"

I said, "I want to take three credits this summer. I don't want to have to take six credits. I'll take six credits if I need to. But I'd rather take three, and take it easy for the summer. But I'll only do that if I know that nothing will be taken off my transcript. If my transcript is the truth, and nothing will be reevaluated, then we're fine." But I explained to him each

case. I was honest with him. I said, “Some of these are completely justifiable, and some of them maybe a little less so.”

And he said, “No problem. You’re cool. Here’s what I’m going to do. I’m going to write you a note guaranteeing you—” So he was very nice about it. Then I was applying to graduate schools.

They still wanted me to go through graduation ceremony. In fact, he mentioned that specifically and I declined. I just didn’t believe in ceremonies. It just seemed silly to me. It was maybe a little unkind of me, because I guess my parents would have appreciated it.

Reti: It’s for them, usually.

Blumenthal: But I wasn’t thinking of them. I was still living at home and I wanted to be out of that house so badly. It just seemed silly. I had no desire to do that.

I’d been applying to grad schools. I knew I would apply to the University of Wisconsin. It seemed a logical place to apply to. But I didn’t know where else to apply. When I got that very, very high score on the GRE, I realized I had options. So I decided to apply to Harvard and Princeton. Then I talked to Bob Greenler and he said, “Well, there’s this new university in California that’s really research oriented. That would be a great place for you to go.” He had mentioned it as La Jolla. I didn’t know what a La Jolla was. So sometime I was looking at some bulletin board and I saw a sign for UC Santa Barbara. So I applied for graduate school at UC Santa Barbara, as did my friend Tom. I mentioned this to Bob Greenler. And he said, “No, no, no, no, that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about UC San Diego.” So I applied to UC San Diego as well, kind of at the last minute.

It turns out I was not admitted to Princeton, and I was waitlisted at Harvard, both of which I’m very thankful for. I would not have thrived at Princeton, I don’t think. I was not

mature enough to have done that. But I was gratefully accepted at San Diego and Santa Barbara and Wisconsin, and chose to go to San Diego. My friend, Tom, went to Santa Barbara, where he got his PhD. So that's how I ended up in San Diego.

As I was contemplating these schools, a couple of things influenced me. I decided to go look up all of the graduate schools. They used to have these—I'm sure they still have them, but they're probably more now online—but in those days, you'd have these books. *Peterson's Guide to Colleges and Universities*, or somebody else's guide. So I was looking up these undergraduate universities. These books were in the physics office. I remember one of the senior physics professors, who I didn't know very well, but I knew a little bit and he knew me, came and asked me, "What are you doing?"

I said, "I'm looking at these universities."

He said, "Why?"

I said, "Well, I'm trying to decide what the ratio of male to female students is at the university."

He said, "But this is for graduate school?" I said yeah. He said, "Well, why would you let that influence what you want to do for graduate school?"

I said, "Because it's important to me." (Reti laughs) He walked away shaking his head. He was convinced I was nuts. But I was, of course, convinced that this was a very wise thing to do.

Reti: That is interesting. In physics, of course, there probably weren't that many women.

Blumenthal: There were hardly any women in physics. But I wanted to go to a university where there was a 50/50 pool of men and women, or something close to that. I think that actually was very wise of me at the time.

Bob had recommended San Diego, so I might have gone there anyway. But when I looked on their list of faculty, they had a Nobel Prize winner, Maria Goeppert Mayer, who I did get to know. She was a very interesting woman. So I think at the end of the day, it was a very, very good choice for me. I feel very, very lucky that I did it.

Reti: Was studying astronomy part of your thinking at this point?

Blumenthal: No. I knew almost nothing about astronomy. If you'd have asked me, I would have told you I wasn't interested in astronomy. I thought astronomy was looking through telescopes at the stars. I hadn't really thought deeply about it. I was really clear: I was interested in particle physics. I wanted to understand the fundamental nature of matter—the smallest stuff, the fundamental building blocks— that's where my interests lay. So, no, I was very clear in my own mind about that.

Reti: And how did you get interested in particle physics?

Blumenthal: Because it was the forefront. Everyone knew that was the forefront of physics, that the fundamental, basic questions of physics that you want to ask are at that level. I wanted to get down to the basics, to the very, very most core, fundamental thing. I wasn't interested in solid state physics, or in plasma physics, which many people were interested in, which were good fields. But I wanted to do something fundamental.

Reti: This seems like a good place to stop for today.

Blumenthal: It maybe is.

Reti: And dive into graduate school that next time.

Graduate School at the University of California, San Diego

Reti: All right. So today is Monday, July 16, 2018. This is Irene Reti and I'm here for the third session with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our oral history that we're doing together. Today we're going to start by talking about your graduate education at UC San Diego. Last time we talked about how you'd gone through the process of figuring out where you were going to go. Then you chose UC San Diego.

Blumenthal: Right. So I left home. After finishing summer school at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, where I took a course over the summer, which gave me my 120 credits so I could graduate, I drove out to San Diego, which was an interesting experience. I'd never lived away from home for long periods. I was twenty years old. I'd never been west. So it was scary in its own way.

So I drove out to San Diego. When I arrived, the first job I had to do was to find a place to live. I pulled up a newspaper and went to the rentals section. I ended up looking at a few places, but I ended up renting the first place I looked at, which was a one-bedroom furnished apartment in Mission Beach, one half block from the ocean and one half block from Mission Bay. It cost me this grand total of 54 dollars a month.

Reti: Students reading this are going to hate you. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I know. It was even cheap for those times. (laughs) I think the previous occupant had died in there and that may have been some factor. I don't know. But they kept the rent at 54 dollars for three years.

Reti: Wow. Wonderful.

Blumenthal: Anyway, it was a great place. It was made out of brick. It had thick walls. You couldn't hear what was going on next door. The location was ideal. I was hardly the with-it guy, but I liked the idea of being in a place where there was likely to be a social life. So that was really good.

After I found the apartment and moved in, I did the obvious things. I bought dishes and whatever. I'd read the newspaper every day, so I subscribed to the local newspaper, which was I think the *San Diego Union-Tribune* today. I think in those days, the *Union* was in the morning and the *Tribune* was in the afternoon. I don't remember which one I subscribed to. But I remember getting that newspaper and being shocked by it, just shocked. I had spent my life reading the *Milwaukee Journal*, which in those days you would have described as a pretty good newspaper, as city newspapers go. Slightly, somewhat left of center in terms of its political orientation, but there was no question of fake news, as we would say today. It was pretty straight, in terms of its news. The *San Diego Union Tribune* was unbelievably bad. It didn't even have pretensions of being an objective news source. It was full of right-wing propaganda. I wasn't even a left winger. I was probably socially liberal and economically conservative and foreign policy conservative at that time in my life. But I couldn't abide it.

I later learned that this was a Copley newspaper, that they had never in San Diego published a picture of a black person in the newspaper.⁹ It was a pretty bad newspaper. So within a week of subscribing to the newspaper, I canceled my subscription. It was a shock to me. I just thought this was a part of life—you read a newspaper every day. But it was a harbinger of things to come in San Diego, because San Diego was remarkably conservative. I have to remember to come back to that.

So then I drove to see this new university that I was suddenly going to be a part of. The university is in La Jolla. It was a substantial drive. It's probably eight to ten miles between Mission Beach and the university.

Reti: And it was fairly new then. Wasn't it one of the three campuses that was started in—

Blumenthal: It was one of the three UC campuses started in the sixties. It had existed as the Scripps Institute of Oceanography prior to that. And it was unusual in that when it opened its doors around 1960, or whenever exactly it was, the first classes that they admitted were just graduate students. So it had almost the opposite history of UC Santa Cruz. Where Santa Cruz was predominantly undergraduate, San Diego was not just predominantly, but exclusively graduate students in its first few years. By the time I arrived, I think they had at least one year, maybe two, under their belt, of undergraduates. But the only college that was there was Revelle College and I suspect the graduate student population was larger than the undergraduate population when I arrived.

I drove up there and I went and found the physics department. I walked into the physics office. They had somebody sitting in the front desk. I told her who I was. She was so, so nice. Her name was Pat. I remember she was saying, "Oh, we were wondering when you would arrive." I bet she said that to everybody, but for me, it meant a lot. Because literally, the only people I knew west of the Mississippi were my relatives in L.A.

Reti: Yeah. That's pretty brave. And you were only twenty.

Blumenthal: I was only twenty.

Reti: That's young for a grad student, right?

Blumenthal: I was young for a graduate student and quite immature, very unworldly, believe me. (laughter) So it meant a lot to me. It was very nice to feel wanted by somebody, or at least my existence was acknowledged by somebody.

I mean I later on—this wasn't Pat, but it was rather the department manager, Joyce Sessa, was sort of the opposite in terms of supportiveness. Because at San Diego—and we'll talk about this a little bit later—when you take your qualifying exam after two years, or I should say departmental exam, so they examine everything you knew about physics. In those days, it was a four-day written exam, followed two weeks later by an oral exam. You were given two chances to pass it. And if you didn't pass it the first time, you got a notice in your mailbox that you hadn't passed. If you didn't pass it the second time, on your mailbox, your name was whited out. (laughs)

Reti: You were erased from existence.

Blumenthal: You were erased. It was not exactly the most supportive environment in the world.

But for me, that beginning was really important. I remembered it, and many years later when I hired a department manager in astronomy, I wanted somebody who could say to new graduate students how welcome they were. That had meant so, so much to me.

Anyway, I showed up. I enjoyed living in Mission Beach. I lived there the whole time I was in grad school. I lived at that apartment for all but one year. Eventually somebody bought the apartment building and moved in himself to my apartment, so I was evicted, and I moved down the street into another apartment. But I really liked living there. It was a relaxing place. I loved being away from the university.

And I wasn't lonely because right at the beginning, I started to meet some of my classmates. One of them, I at first I thought was a rather strange guy, he was from Berkeley, and never let you forget that he was from Berkeley. His name is Jay Dratler. And a week or so after school started, he was telling me one day that he couldn't find a place to live. I said, "Oh, there's a lot of apartments to rent down where I live." I said, "Why don't you come down? We'll have dinner together and you can go look at some places." So he came down and looked at and rented an apartment half a block from where I lived. And he stayed there as well throughout graduate school, except I think near the end he may have moved to another area. I think he may have moved after I left. Jay and I have been lifelong friends. In fact, later in life, after getting his PhD and essentially a tenured position, he gave up physics, went to Harvard Law School, became a lawyer, and then introduced me to my wife.

Reti: Oh, my goodness. A very fateful meeting, then.

Blumenthal: It was, indeed. So I'm really glad I encouraged him to look for an apartment. (laughter) It was really great having a friend down there. We spent a lot of time together, although ironically, I will also admit to you, even though we lived a half a block apart, we spent many hours on the phone with each other, arguing about everything under the sun, which was great fun for me.

Graduate school was scary because when I showed up, there were forty-five graduate students in my entering physics class. That was a lot of students. When I met them, I found that they were from Harvard and Berkeley and Cal Tech—all of these very prestigious places. And I was from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. I thought oh, Jesus, I am really in trouble here. I can't compete with these guys. Of course, it was mostly guys. I think we may have had two women in the entire forty-five student class.

One was from Japan and the other one—I can't remember the other one. So I really was scared. But I got to know my classmates. They didn't seem like they walked on water. But it was still very, very, very scary.

Since I was talking about Jay, I may as well talk about my other friends. Jay became a really, really good friend throughout my life. Another good friend that I made in that class was Chetan Mehta, who is from India. Chetan was really interesting because he's Hindi and he came from a very religious family. I think his parents were somehow in some religious order, I'm not sure I understand completely. But he was clearly a nice guy. He talked so fast, it took me months before I was comfortable understanding him, although I think his accent also improved. He had never eaten meat. And in a way it was really funny because over the years of knowing Chetan; in graduate school, he started eating meat and liking it. (laughs) He had a number of girlfriends. He smoked pot. In fact, he introduced me to pot. So this young man who was even more unworldly than me ended up being so Americanized. Then he ended up driving a motorcycle. So it was very interesting. He later went back to India, where he still is today. He's now at the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai. I saw him not long ago. He came to visit.

My other big friend there was a guy named Don Gindy, who was studying to be a lawyer at the University of San Diego. Don also lived in Mission Beach. In fact, he and Jay and I were kind of a triangle in terms of the physical location of our apartments. Don was very much into law. The three of us hung out a lot and we used to have great fun. We used to convene what we called the Court of East Mission Beach (Reti laughs) and argue out issues. Don graduated, became a public defender in L.A. He did that for a few years, until he couldn't stand it anymore. What he told me was, "The problem with being a public defender is A, almost all of your clients are guilty; B, you almost never win; C, when you win, it's sometimes somebody who you think is guilty. But the ones who you think are not

guilty are not the ones you win.” He said he couldn’t handle that. So he’s done intellectual property law for many years now.

Reti: And when you say you were arguing out issues with these friends, what was the general content of what you were arguing about?

Blumenthal: Oh, it could be politics. It could be philosophy. It could be anything. I mean, we argued about almost everything, constantly.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: But it was fun. I really enjoyed that. And it was during that time that I really got my love of history. So I started intensively reading history books. I found that really an expanding part of my life, to do that.

The way it works in graduate school, at least in San Diego, you took classes for two years. You could do research along the way, but you had to take these classes and do well in them, and then pass this exam that I had mentioned to you. It was interesting. I had some great teachers. My first quarter there, for electromagnetism, I had Walter Kohn as my instructor. He later won the Nobel Prize.¹⁰ Just a very solid guy. A very interesting man, and a very ethical man. I always liked Walter. He was on the last train out of Austria before Hitler marched in.

And I took a class at one point from Bill Frazer, who later became the provost of the University of California.¹¹ I recently (2019) ran into Bill at a meeting. We were stuck by how parallel our career paths have been: physics student, UC Professor, chair of the UC Academic Senate, oversight of the national Labs, highest level of senior leadership at UC, and (currently) member of the trustees of the American University of Armenia. We were also each involved in starting a new college. So, some interesting characters were there.

These are only some of the interesting characters. But my first quarter was an eye-opener. I took electromagnetism, which Kohn taught in a very standard way, and it was a great course. I took a course in mechanics, which was taught by a guy named Barry Block, who taught the most unconventional things in that class. I really minded it because he wasn't teaching the usual material. But I learned a lot, so that made it worthwhile. I really *did* learn a lot from him. It was stuff I really wouldn't have wanted to learn on my own, anyway. So that was good. Then I took a course in mathematical methods for physics at the graduate level from a guy named Jacob Korevaar, who was very good.

It was interesting, because I was, as I said, so scared about being able to compete in this group. So the first exam I took was the one in math, like a midterm or something. When he handed it back, I'd gotten a very high grade, so I was very pleased. That was the good news. The bad news is, he asked me to see him. So I went to see him and he said, "You know, you're not registered for this class." I said, "What do you mean I'm not registered for this class?" He says, "You're not registered for this class."

So I had to go to the registrar and they said, "No, you're registered not for Math 227; you're registered for Physics 227."

I said, "Oh my God, how could I have done this? This is terrible." Way past the drop/add deadline, etcetera, etcetera. I said, "Could you just check the original form that I submitted?" So they went and they found it and they checked it. I had done it right. They had screwed up.

Reti: Oh, so it was their mistake. Thank God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So they fixed it. Can you imagine?

Reti: I can.

Blumenthal: I was so scared. Anyway, I soon discovered that I was doing okay relative to my peers, in fact even very well relative to my peers. That hadn't been what I expected. I think it is a tribute to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee that I emerged from there with a pretty good undergraduate background in physics, and when they didn't offer the courses, as I told you last time, they made sure I got that material. I give them a lot of credit for that.

Reti: Were your fellow graduate students more middle-class, upper middle-class folks?

Blumenthal: They were *all* middle class, upper middle-class folks.

Reti: I would kind of guess, given where they went to school.

Blumenthal: There was virtually no diversity at UC San Diego, even among undergraduates. In fact, I sometimes think that I knew every black student at UC San Diego in those years, largely because there weren't very many, number one; and number two because Chetan actually, at one point, roomed with a bunch of black undergraduate students. So when I visited him, I kind of saw the crowd. I don't know that that was all of them, but there sure were not a lot. It was not a diverse time.

Reti: I was just wondering how you felt, coming from a working-class, maybe lower-middle-class background to this place with people from Ivy League schools.

Blumenthal: Yeah, it's a fair question. I don't remember feeling that way. I didn't think of it as a class thing. I was much more concerned about educational background issues. I didn't care about things like class. Never bothered me. Still to this day it doesn't bother me whether somebody's at a higher strata, or something than me. What I was concerned about was being able to compete intellectually. I didn't have to worry about money. I had a steady income from my National Science Foundation fellowship. My income was three

thousand dollars per year, 250 dollars a month. That was enough money for me to be able to afford an apartment. I ate out a fair amount, although I always ate out at cheap places. And I could drive a car. I probably couldn't have bought a car with that kind of income, but I had at first this old car that I'd had in Milwaukee. And then after my father died, I took his car.

This would be a good time to skip back to talk about fields and interests. When I entered graduate school, I wanted to do particle physics. So I asked somebody: if I could buy a book and read it on particle physics, what book I should buy. They sent me to a book that was written by a guy named Stephen Gasiorowicz. A very thick book. It was actually a very bad choice for me. It really was a bad choice. They shouldn't have sent me there. But anyway, so I started working through that book in my spare time. I got through a good chunk of it. It was *really* painful, and it was really not that interesting. Gasiorowicz wrote in a very formal style and a very abstract style, and didn't really explain what the hell he was doing half the time. So you had to kind of infer it. It was a very difficult experience. It was not a good book, and it certainly was not a good book for me.

But by the end of my first year, I knew a fair amount about particle physics. So by chance, they had a summer school that summer at San Diego designed for advanced graduate students and postdocs.

Reti: (laughs) You were first year.

Blumenthal: I was at the end of my first year, but it was certainly open to me. So I decided I would attend it. It was a three-week workshop, and the great names of particle physics in the country, or even in the world, were there. I remember some of them. It was quite an experience to hear lectures from these very eminent folks. I struggled through the lectures, because I kind of understood them, but didn't deeply understand them.

I should explain that at least for me in physics, it's not that hard to kind of understand stuff, where it kind of makes sense. But to deeply understand something, you really need to be able to understand everything. It can't be fuzzy. And I was fuzzy on this stuff. But it's not unexpected, since I wasn't really that familiar with it. I was pleased that I understood as much as I did.

This summer school was an eye-opening experience for me. At that time, the field was a little bit interesting in that they had just figured out quarks and particles. Little did I know that they were on the verge of a major new advance, maybe five years later, in electroweak theory and grand, unified theories, though I didn't know that at the time. They were struggling to find the right direction to go in particle physics, but that was a good thing.

Anyway, I sat every day next to a guy who was a postdoc from Caltech, working with Richard Feynman. We just chatted periodically. We just sat next to each other. And one time, as the workshop was coming to a close, I said to him, "Well, how do you like being in La Jolla?" I knew he was staying in the dorms. I said, "Have you gotten to the beach yet?"

He said, "No, I haven't."

I said, "Well, what do you do on weekends?"

He said, "I've been staying in my room, studying the notes for these lectures."

Reti: (laughs) God.

Blumenthal: I remember thinking, oh my God, this is not the guy I want to be up against. If this is what I have to do to succeed, do I really want to do this? So it really caused me a little bit of crisis, of trying to decide, is this what I want to be when I grow up? I wasn't so sure. First of all, I hadn't been so entranced by the subject. Secondly, that

spring I'd heard a seminar from Geoffrey Burbidge, who was a faculty member in astronomy there, a very well-known astrophysicist.¹² Burbidge had talked about these newly discovered objects called quasars, or in those days, they called them quasi-stellar objects. In fact, later Burbidge wrote a book about quasi-stellar objects. In the book, he and his wife pointed out—Margaret Burbidge, another famous astronomer, was his wife—they pointed out that their daughter had heard so much about quasi-stellar objects, she called them crazy stellar objects.¹³ (Reti laughs) But nobody understood what these quasi-stellar objects were. They had a large red shift, which made people think they were maybe the most distant things in the universe. Burbidge was very skeptical of that. But he was very good; Burbidge, though he was highly opinionated, was a great lecturer, and he was very good about presenting the exciting ideas of the field. I had been really excited by his lecture.

So that summer, thinking about what I wanted to do when I grew up, I thought, well, maybe I should rethink my future. If I'm not going to study the smallest things in the universe, the most fundamental building blocks, why don't I study the largest stuff in the universe?

Reti: (laughs) I love it.

Blumenthal: I mean, it was nothing more than that, right? The intermediate was solid state physics, or plasma physics, very practical stuff, very good, and in some cases very interesting stuff for many people. But not fundamental. Your philosophy of the universe would not change based on that. But it would in particle physics, or on the largest scales in the universe.

Also that spring, as a part of this three-semester course—I'm going to pop back to courses for just a minute—that course that I had mentioned Walter Kohn taught was, in fact, a

two-semester course on electromagnetism. The first semester, Kohn taught really well. The second semester, they had some guy teaching it who had never taught before and it was awful! This guy just didn't know how to teach. I went to the lecture, and I didn't understand a word. Nobody did. He heard complaints. So he decided to give the lecture again and do better. It wasn't better and after the second lecture, I made a decision to drop the class. It was a required class, but I dropped it anyway. Don't tell anyone, because maybe they'll take away my PhD. (Reti laughs) I just dropped it. I figured, this is bullshit. I'm not going to sit in this class. I'll learn it on my own. The irony is, I did learn it on my own and later, the material in that class became a key part of my PhD dissertation.

Reti: They probably won't take your PhD away, then. (laughs)

Blumenthal: No, I don't think they will. I also taught that material in Santa Cruz. So that was one class.

Another class was this mechanics class that I told you the first quarter of which, he covered unusual topics. That was a three-quarter sequence. The second quarter, he covered the usual topics and did it fairly well. And the third quarter, he covered general relativity. He used a great book on general relativity, a book by Adler, Bazin, and Schiffer. I really loved that subject. It was so clear, so straightforward. It was very mathematical, but—

Reti: (laughs) Your mind does not work the same way mine does.

Blumenthal: Well, maybe that's a good thing about the world, that we're all different.

Reti: That's right.

Blumenthal: But I loved it. I loved general relativity. I thought it was a great theory. I thought it was beautiful. I thought it was elegant. It appealed to me. I felt toward it the

way someone looking at a wonderful piece of art thinks about the art, or a music connoisseur thinks about a great concerto. That's how I felt about general relativity.

Reti: Beautiful.

Blumenthal: I thought it was a beautiful theory, very elegant. It had to be right, it was so beautiful. So I was already thinking about things in the large before that summer had even begun. I was thinking, maybe I'll do astrophysics. So I thought, I should be at least a little bit smart about this. I only knew Burbidge from his talk; I knew a guy named Bob Gould who was much more located in physics, but Gould was an astrophysicist. He had been assigned as my advisor, so I had to get my courses approved by him. But those were the only people I knew.

It turned out I was in one of these big bullpen offices. I shared an office with about ten other graduate students. One of them was an advanced student in astronomy, in astrophysics, named Malcolm Walmsley. He was from Ireland. So I asked Malcolm, I said, "Malcolm, I'm thinking about switching into astrophysics."

He said, "Oh, it's a great field. You'll enjoy it."

I said, "Well, I heard this talk by Burbidge. Maybe I should go approach Burbidge and see whether or not there's some project I could do."

I don't know if he did this explicitly, but he did something symbolically equivalent to showing me a cross. (Reti laughs) And says, "Don't do that."

I said, "What do you mean, don't do that?"

He said, "Well, nobody works for Geoff."

I said, "I thought you were working for Geoff."

He said, “Officially, I am working for Geoff, but I’m doing all my work with Bill Mathews.”

That’s actually *our* Bill Mathews.¹⁴ [now at UC Santa Cruz]

Reti: I figured.

Blumenthal: “I have nothing to do with Geoff,” he said. “Don’t go to Geoff. That would be a huge mistake.”

I pondered that for a while and I said, “So who should I go to?” He mentioned a few people, one of whom was Bill, one of whom was Bob Gould, one of whom was another guy named Axford. I thought to myself, well, I know Gould. So why don’t I just pop in to see him?

So I went to see Gould, and I asked him if there’s a project he could put me on, that I could start to work on. He said sure. He gave me a little project trying to understand high-energy particles and what their distribution function is among cosmic rays. That started my relationship with Gould. It was really very fortuitous, because it turned out Gould was an absolutely fantastic dissertation advisor. He never became super-duper famous. They say you should always work with somebody that’s super-duper famous because that will help you. But Gould, as a person and as an advisor, he was always available, always sensible, and always kind of subtly pushed me. Didn’t push me hard, but pushed me in the right way. A very easy-going guy. He was maybe in his early to mid-thirties. Relatively young. He wore shorts every day. (Reti laughs) And for me, that was also hard. I came from the Midwest. Faculty wore suits. And in fact, I will also tell you, throughout my four years working with him, I struggled knowing what to call him. I couldn’t bring myself to call him Professor Gould or Dr. Gould, because it seemed way too formal. On the other hand, it didn’t feel quite right to call him Bob. So I never called him anything. (Reti laughs) Knowing what I know now, I should have just called him Bob. He would have been fine

with that. It would not have been an issue. But I was too nervous to think of doing something like that. It seemed so forward.

Anyway, it was a very good choice on my part. Gould had other students as well, who I got to know and learned a lot from. One was a guy named Thakur, which was his last name. He is Indian. His first name was completely unpronounceable, so everyone called him Thakur. Interesting guy. He came over to the US with his wife, who was a physician, but she couldn't practice in California. So she actually moved to Arizona, where she could get a license and practice medicine while he was a graduate student in San Diego.

Reti: Hmm. That wasn't as common then.

Blumenthal: It was not common then. Absolutely. And Thakur was also interesting because in India, as you may know, in those days it was still very common practice to have marriages be arranged. He came from a family where that was the practice. He had something like seven or eight sisters, and he was the only male sibling. I think he was the oldest. And when it came time for him to get married, he refused. He put conditions on his wedding that the family refused to do. Part of it was that the wife's family had to wait on the husband and the husband's family. He found that demeaning. So he refused. It caused some enmity within his family. But then his father died, and suddenly he was responsible for his sisters. And he had not a lot of money, so it looked like he couldn't go to college or graduate school. So he wrote a book on how to pass the Indian national exam to get into college, and that book became a bestseller. It earned him enough money that he could put aside enough money for dowries for his sisters.

Reti: That's incredible. So entrepreneurial.

Blumenthal: And go to school himself. That's how he was able to go to school. Then he later married himself, a marriage of choice, rather than an arranged marriage. Anyway,

Thakur was in the office. And another guy named Giacomo Cavallo, who was from Italy. Giacomo was very smart guy. One day we were sitting in the office, just looking at some magazine or journal and there was an article in there about this first digit phenomena. I don't know if you even know it, but if you pick up any book of numbers, like from the *Handbook of Physics and Chemistry*, a thick book of numbers, pick up the book, pick a table, and just make a histogram of the first digits of all of those numbers, you naively would expect that the first digits would be equally probable. In fact, that is not the case. You can pick any table and make a plot. They're not uniform. This was a known phenomenon. Somebody had told us about it from some magazine or something. We, of course, checked and made a few histograms ourselves, and that night we went off to think about it, and came back the next day. I had a theory for why it should be what it is. I even had a distribution function. Giacomo also came up with a theory. He came up with the same answer, but from a completely different approach. You would never even imagine they could get to the same result.

It turns out, when we later did a little research, there were two known explanations. He had found one, and I had found the other. So he was definitely a smart guy and his explanation was much more complicated than mine.

The dynamics within the astronomy group were somewhat strange. For example, there was a weekly seminar, which was nice. Sometimes I thought Burbidge would sit in the front row and always spend more time looking behind him to see who was there, than looking toward the front.

They also had these astronomy lunches, which were only for faculty and postdocs. Graduate students—not invited. They would take a speaker to lunch. This was all known; this was the way of the world. And the group was separated. Gould was up where the

physics department was; Burbidge and his group and Bill Mathews were down at the Institute for Geophysics and Planetary Physics down at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography. So those lunches were important. Anyway, one day I'm sitting in the office minding my own business, and Bob Gould walked in and he said, to Thakur and me, who were sitting there, "I want you two to come to lunch with us."

Reti: Oh my God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I said, "Are you sure?"

He said, "Yeah, there's no reason why you shouldn't come to lunch." Of course, I knew Burbidge didn't want us to come to lunch. So finally, I said to Thakur, I said, "I'll go if you'll go." He said, "All right." So we went to lunch. And, of course, they sat me next to Burbidge.

Reti: The politics of graduate study. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Exactly. So I just pretended like it was the most natural thing; I didn't know what else to do. I surely didn't want to talk to him, because I had nothing to say to him. After that, we kept coming to the lunches every week. We just made it normal. I really give Bob credit. He was just not willing to put up with the BS of treating the graduate students differently. I give him high marks for that. I have no idea what he went through to make that happen.

Then came the second year of graduate school. What would normally happen is students would take courses throughout their second year. Then in the fall, at the beginning of their third year, they would take this exam that I had mentioned. So I was taking courses the second year and working on this problem with Bob Gould¹⁵ on the distribution function of cosmic rays, and making some progress, but not as much progress as I'd hoped.

It turned out it was a very hard problem, which I did solve later. I did solve it in graduate school. I did make it a part of my dissertation. But as I recall, it was more luck than not that I solved it. I derived the appropriate equation, but finding solutions to that equation was a bear. Somehow I lucked onto it and wrote a paper on it. And it was kind of ironic because I wrote this paper; I didn't think it was that important a result; I forgot about it. And then, like thirty years later, I'm in a seminar at Santa Cruz and some guy's giving a talk and he talked about this crucial paper by George Blumenthal. I didn't even know what the hell he was talking about at first.

Anyway, I worked on that research during the second year. But mostly, I was taking classes. And again, it was a mixed bag. One of the classes was by Maria [Goeppert] Mayer, who was one of the reasons I went to San Diego. She's a Nobel Prize winner in physics.¹⁶ Maria Mayer was a woman who studied physics in Göttingen before the war, and she married another physicist named Joe Mayer. Both were quite good. And then, as the war approached, they left Germany and came to the United States, where Joe Mayer got a job at Columbia on the faculty, and Maria Mayer became a teaching assistant at Columbia.¹⁷ That went on for a couple of years, and then Joe Mayer got a faculty position at the University of Chicago, so they moved there. But Maria could not get a job even as a teaching assistant in Chicago. So all she did was on her own time—she did research. She was trying to solve one of the big, not-understood issues of the day.

So if you look at atoms, atomic spectra, they have certain lines of radiation. Those, by that time, were extremely well understood and well known. Well, it turns out if you look at the nuclei of atoms, they also have a spectrum of radiation and gamma rays. But that spectrum was not understood. They almost felt like they understood it using similar physics to what an atom does, but there were some lines that were reversed from where they should be. It didn't make sense. It was a huge, enormous puzzle. That's what Maria

was working on. She was working with Enrico Fermi, *the* Enrico Fermi. Unpaid. One day she was in his office, talking to him about the problem, and he got a phone call. And while he was on the phone, she had this sudden insight. So when he got off the phone, she told him her idea, and he said, “That’s a great idea. You should write it up. Get it published.” So she did. And it won her the Nobel Prize.

Reti: Wow. That’s remarkable.

Blumenthal: That’s why I thought that was a good story.

So I liked Maria. Later on, when I became politically active, she was very supportive of my political activism. But the first time I really encountered her was in her class on nuclear physics. And it was quite—I’ve talked about a few bad classes. This took the cake. I remember I walked in there the first day and she’s lecturing to us. First of all, I had trouble understanding her because I think she had serious emphysema by that point, so she had a lot of trouble just speaking. In fact, I think they hooked her up with a microphone. It was just in a thirty or forty-person classroom. Maybe a forty or fifty-person classroom. But it wasn’t a lecture hall. And yet you couldn’t understand her without the microphone in the class. And then she would ramble on about stuff. She always had a cigarette in one hand and chalk in the other. Half the time she’d try to write on the board with the cigarette. (laughs) I sat through one class, and I’m not sure whether I went to the second. But I decided, enough. I dropped the class again. I guess that was my pattern. I couldn’t bear the pain of being in those classes. Again, it was a required course. I figured I’d study it on my own, so I learned nuclear physics on my own.

I really pitied my classmates. I was the only one who dropped it. They’d all come back from the class and say, “Was she talking about nuclear democracy or nuclear this?” And they couldn’t tell—I mean, it was painful.

Reti: That's sad.

Blumenthal: They complained to the department, which eventually agreed to set up some extra lectures on nuclear physics by somebody else, on the condition that no one tell Maria Mayer. She was kind of an icon, but she was way past it by that point.

Reti: You kind of got to her too late.

Blumenthal: Yes. But she was an interesting character.

Then during that second year, Gould, one day I'm in talking to him, and he said, "Oh, by the way, I think you ought to just take your exams early."

I said, "What?!" (laughter)

He said, "Yeah, I think you ought to take your exams early. Take them this spring. Don't wait until next fall, when everyone else does. Get them out of the way." I was thinking, oh, shit. (laughter)

Reti: You can't really say no.

Blumenthal: That's exactly right. So I decided to do it. The way most students in those days studied for the exams is they would take out all their textbooks and they'd study all the materials. Everyone did the same thing. We'd get the Feynman lecture series, which was a three-volume set, and go through it in great, gory detail to review all the physics. Then they'd be ready.

I decided that was just not going to be what I could do. I was taking classes. I didn't have the time. I didn't have the summer to do this.

Reti: Most people would do that over the summer.

Blumenthal: Right. So I decided that number one, I would make sure I read the books for the courses I had dropped. So I made sure I read nuclear physics. I had not yet taken particle physics. Bill Frazer taught a course which was almost practical particle physics. It wasn't really experimental. It wasn't the abstract theory. It was more trying to understand the taxonomy. I think of it as biology, how you classify particles, than it was about the underlying physics. So I read his book as well, because I knew there would be a question on the exam on that. So I just kept studying for the exam while taking classes. And we took some interesting classes.

The other class—which I've mentioned to students many times over the years, so I'll tell you the story as well, was a course in statistical physics by a guy named Fredkin. It was a two-hour class meeting twice a week, and he was teaching it to like forty-five people. It was one of these rooms kind of shaped like this office, with a long board across the whole width of the room, but not a pulldown, just one super-duper long board. He would get up, and from memory, without any notes, he would start lecturing and writing equations on the board. We'd all be sitting in this class, and we'd be madly writing down his equations and trying to understand. But it was really hard to understand and write at the same time. We were struggling to do it. He wasn't following the book. He was doing things in an unusual way.

And there would always come a crisis point in the class—usually about an hour, or forty-five minutes into the class—where he had filled the board, was back, and now was erasing equations, and erasing the point where many of us were copying. He was a very intimidating figure. So at that point, my friend Jay, who I mentioned earlier, the one who later became a lawyer, would always raise his hand. (Reti laughs) He would pick an equation at random on the board, and he would say, "Dr. Fredkin, could you please explain the physical significance of that equation?"

Reti: While you all were like madly—(laughs)

Blumenthal: And we're all madly trying to catch up. So by the end of the term, Fredkin thought Jay was an idiot. (laughter) But we all thought he was a hero.

Reti: He had guts.

Blumenthal: Anyway, the exam was coming up and I was studying. I read the books. I got this book which was so helpful. There was a book by former students at the University of Chicago covering the past ten years of their departmental exam questions in physics, plus solutions. I used that as my bible. I went through that in great, gory detail. That was exceptionally helpful. That was really good.

And then the last thing was, I think I may have mentioned this to you already, I'm not real good about memorizing stuff. I'm not real good about memorizing equations. But with four days, four hours each of written physics questions—I knew I needed to know some equations. So I made up a whole bunch of pages of equations, which I pasted on the walls of my apartment, so that I would memorize them. It was kind of silly, but I just felt like that would save me time. So those were the only three things I did.

It was tough because about six days before my exam, I got a call from my mother to tell me that my father had died.

Reti: Oh, George. My goodness.

Blumenthal: So I got an airplane reservation, flew back to Milwaukee, which was not easy because I didn't even have enough money on my credit card to pay for the ticket. I think I overcharged my card, plus paid partially in cash or something. So I did that. I went back for the funeral and stayed a few days, and then came back, I think the day before the exam.

I remember I saw Gould when I got back to my office and he said he'd heard about this and offered condolences. He said, "You know, you don't have to do this."

I said, "Look, I've come this far." So I did; I took the exam, which was not fun. But, in fact, I actually believe that having gone off to my father's funeral and dealt with all the family issues that I had to deal with was probably the best thing I could have done with the time. It took my mind off physics. Otherwise, I would have studied up until the end, which I think is not a good thing to do. And it just gave me—it was a break. It was an emotionally draining break, of course. But I think it helped me a lot. And in fact, I later learned I got the highest score of the students who took the exam.

Then we had to do this oral exam two weeks later. The way that worked was they put together a committee for each student. You were given a choice of three topics and you had to give a presentation for a half hour on one of the topics. Then you had to answer questions on the topic. And then you had another half hour of general questions on physics. This was *really* stressful, because first of all, usually they'd had a particle physics topic, a solid state physics topic, and an astrophysics topic. This time they didn't have an astrophysics topic. They had two particle physics topics and a solid state topic. So it was automatically in something I didn't know that much about. I chose the self-focusing of laser beams, which I spent a lot of time reading up on. I spent a lot of time in the library reading through stuff. And, in fact, I remember that because while I was studying in the library, there was a big earthquake, and you could see the floor of the library buckling. I remember my first instinct was to run outside, which I did. But running outside meant running into the enclosed courtyard. I decided that was not a good idea. So I had to run back in. I started to run outside and realized I better take my notes. So I ran back in for my notes and got them. Then the next thing I did is I called my house to see whether my phone would ring because I was afraid Mission Beach might have fallen off into the ocean.

Reti: That's what you always hear about California, right? (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yes. The other thing that was stressful was when the exam committee met, I had three examiners, which was fine, and they were reasonable people. But one of them didn't show up. So they decided that they were going to go get Walter Kohn, who's a nice guy who I like. But Walter Kohn knows everything you ever could imagine about physics, and he was known as a difficult stickler. So I was panicked when they were going to go get him. Then at the last minute, the guy that was supposed to show up did.

I did that and it was fine. I was able to answer the questions they asked. It was good. Later on, Bob Gould told me that I had scored highest and had done exceptionally well, which was good.

Reti: Wow, the stress of being a graduate student.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Very stressful.

So then Bob told me, and I'm not sure this is the correct sequence, that he was going off to Australia on sabbatical for a year to the University of Sydney. He suggested that since I'd made some progress on this project, he and I should spend a year writing back and forth, and that we would write a *Review of Modern Physics* article about cosmic rays and radiation processes. I said fine, and we did do that. He had done most of the work. I did a lot, but he did a lot as well.

In a way, it was kind of strange. He never invited me to come with him to Australia, which I might have been tempted to do. But I'm glad I didn't because I think it was better for me to have stayed and matured. Basically, other than working a little bit on this article, I did nothing that year physics-related. I went to seminars; I showed up in my office. But I mostly got involved in politics.

Activism as a Graduate Student

So let's take a brief sojourn into the politics of the time. In those days, San Diego was one of the most conservative communities in the country. I already mentioned my shock at the local newspaper. I was also shocked at my local assemblyman. He was a guy named E. Richard Barnes. I'll never forget him, because I remember watching him on TV during his campaign for reelection. He was a single-issue candidate and his single issue was smut.

Reti: Wow. (laughs) This is like something out of a tiny town someplace, not San Diego.

Blumenthal: Exactly. And that's what he campaigned on. He was clearly this religious nut. That's all he cared about, and he fathered legislation on pornography and smut in California. That was his great legacy to the state of California.

Reti: Place me in time here. About what year are we at now?

Blumenthal: Oh, I went to graduate school in 1966.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: So by this time, it's about 1968. But it was in '66 that Barnes was doing this stuff with smut already. I was already turned off by him.

When I arrived at San Diego, I was probably in many ways a social liberal, but not completely. My parents were quite conservative. I was a supporter of the war in Vietnam. Our country was doing this; I needed to support what our country did. I was, and frankly still am, personally very conservative on things like finance, so I'm sure from a financial perspective, I was conservative. But I was more willing to be more liberal on social issues. That was who I was when I came to San Diego.

One of the first things that happened after I got there was—and I'd never been politically active, or even all that politically interested—I got some flyer from a group that was called the California Coalition to Legalize Abortion. I don't know how I got that flyer, but it appeared in my mailbox. I remember I got it and I looked at it. Of course, I knew abortion was illegal everywhere. My parents had talked about some abortionist in Milwaukee. I remember thinking about it and saying, wait a minute! But why? Why not let people decide what they want to do? What's the real reason to make this illegal?

So I signed up and paid my 15 or 25 dollars or whatever it was, and I joined. That was the first political organization I ever joined. It wasn't deep thought. It just made sense to me. So I started following that issue.

And then on the bigger issues like the war in Vietnam, which was then accelerating, of course Jay and I had many long discussions. Jay informed me early in our relationship that he was going to convert me from my archaic conservative position. And, in fact, he did. I did a complete 180. I became stridently antiwar.

Reti: Do you remember what it was that he said to you that was convincing?

Blumenthal: I don't think it was any one thing. It was the totality. Frankly, I was also convinced by the propaganda that the US government put out. One of my memories of the time was that every few months General William Westmoreland, who was the commander in chief in Vietnam, would come back and he'd hold some news conference when he met with the president and say, "Oh, victory is just around the corner." He'd keep doing this! Year after year, you know? Something's wrong with this picture.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: So I was starting to get very cynical, even when I'd arrived in San Diego. But that cynicism hadn't translated into active opposition. So that was going on.

Then meanwhile, back at the ranch, in California, this guy Ronald Reagan was running for governor basically on an anti-university platform: to clean up the mess in Berkeley because of the Free Speech Movement. Everyone is so proud now that Berkeley is home of the Free Speech Movement, but then it was a trying time. Reagan was clearly awful. I didn't even appreciate at the time how bad it was, but he certainly was bad. 1966 was when he was elected governor, so he was elected governor shortly after I arrived.

By the beginning of '68, or late '67, I was pretty much converted to being pretty darn liberal or radical. I was convinced that the war in Vietnam was horrible and that I needed to do everything I could on those fronts. So one of the first organizations I became very active in during that year was an effort to recall Ronald Reagan as governor. I circulated petitions. That was fun. I almost got arrested a number of times. We were really smart. I'm amazed at how smart we were. We checked in with the city attorney in San Diego about what was legal and what was not, about where you could collect signatures. There had just been a Supreme Court decision.¹⁸ It established the concept of quasi-public locations, locations that may be privately owned but which are sufficiently public that the public have an expectation that they can exercise free speech in those areas, like a shopping center, for example.

We had checked in with the city attorney to find out what was legal, and it was a good thing we did, because we went out and circulated signatures in many places. We were frequently threatened with arrest. And when we were threatened, we said, "Go check with the city."

So it was an interesting experience. I got to meet some interesting people along the way doing that, as well. There was a guy, Bob Mishell, who was a doctor at the Scripps Institute. Later, he went to Berkeley as a faculty member. He and his wife were great mentors; they had lots of young people always around their house, and I was one of them. He was kind of fun.

I don't remember the numbers, in those days it probably required like 250,000 signatures to put a recall petition on the ballot. We had more than half, but not the right number.

Reti: Hmm. Boy, history would have been different.

Blumenthal: Well, we were doing this because he was also running for president in '68. He was trying to get the Republican nomination for president. We thought it would be cool to have him recalled while he was trying to become president. Of course, Nixon got the nomination, but there was a time when Reagan was a legitimate candidate.

Reti: Do you remember when Clark Kerr was fired?¹⁹

Blumenthal: I do. But it didn't make the impression on me that it should have. I was pretty focused. This was my first year of graduate school.

Reti: Okay. I just wondered because I know here at Santa Cruz, there were a lot of protests when that happened.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Graduate students are in a different place, too.

Blumenthal: That's right. I think that Reagan came to a Regents meeting in San Diego and many people protested against that. I may have even been there, but it didn't really

register that much. But I didn't really know that much about Clark Kerr, to tell you the truth, at the time.

So anyway, I got involved in the Recall Reagan thing, which failed. Then I became much more involved in the antiwar effort, which started to become convolved with the election that was going to take place in November. I remember when Johnson announced he wouldn't run for reelection, Hubert Humphrey announced, as did Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy. McCarthy had entered the race before the New Hampshire primaries, so, in fact, his showing against Lyndon Johnson is one of the things that induced Johnson to withdraw. So McCarthy had been there for a while. Then Bobby Kennedy jumped into the race after Johnson withdrew. So it became a Bobby Kennedy versus McCarthy race. Then Hubert Humphrey jumped in, clearly with the president's support. So it became a three-way race. Hubert Humphrey was no arch-conservative, by any stretch of the imagination, but he was the candidate of the Vietnam War administration and he had to live with the rock around his neck of being closely associated with Lyndon Johnson.

So it was an interesting campaign leading up to the summer of the Chicago Democratic convention, which I'm sure you know about. But, of course, I remember distinctly when Bobby Kennedy was assassinated. That night, in fact, Jay and I were in my apartment watching TV after the primary in California. That's when Kennedy was assassinated, that evening. So we were literally watching live TV when that was happened, just like I was watching live TV when Oswald was shot.

So, of course, we were all extremely interested in what was going to go on in the convention. After Kennedy's assassination, ultimately he was replaced by George McGovern, who didn't progress very far that year, at least. We were all very cynical about whether the Democratic Party was going to be adequately antiwar.

So at that time, the Peace and Freedom Party started up in California. There was no question that the Peace and Freedom Party was antiwar, so many of us, including me, re-registered to vote under the Peace and Freedom Party banner, so that we could, first, establish it on the ballot, which we did succeed in doing. And then the question was: who was going to be the nominee?

The nominating convention was at Griffith Park in Los Angeles and I attended. There were three candidates to be the nominee. One was Gene McCarthy. One was Dick Gregory, who was running on an antiwar platform. And the third was Eldridge Cleaver. I don't remember that McCarthy was there, although people did give speeches on his behalf. I do remember Dick Gregory was there, and I do remember Eldridge Cleaver was there. Of course, Eldridge Cleaver loved to say some pretty outrageous things.

So we had the convention and at the end of the day everyone got a vote. I voted for Gene McCarthy, because I wanted him. I already knew that he was not going to be the Democratic nominee, or thought he wouldn't be. Eldridge Cleaver won, however, so he was the nominee of the Peace and Freedom Party that year, although I think there was some question about whether it was legal, because he may have been under thirty-five or something. I don't remember the details. But that was their conclusion from the party convention, at least, for what it was worth.

We all know what happened. It was a somewhat interesting campaign, in that one thing Nixon did is he came to San Diego and did a retreat after the Republican convention. He was literally staying a few blocks from where I lived, in one of the resorts in Mission Bay, but I never saw him. He was pretty much holed up. That election was interesting, in that Nixon was way out in front throughout most of the season, but toward the end, as Election Day approached, Hubert Humphrey was catching up. It ended up being a very, very close

election. Had it gone on for another week, it's quite possible Humphrey would have won. So it was the first in my long string of presidential candidates I voted for who didn't win. (laughter)

Anyway, I became much more involved then also during that year in other antiwar activities. I attended a lot of rallies. There were a lot of rallies on campus in 1968. It was quite a year, lots of stuff going on. There was a student activist on campus who was very articulate and very good, by the name of Angela Davis.

Reti: Oh, she was a student at that time, at UCSD.

Blumenthal: She was a student at San Diego. She was studying for a PhD under Herbert Marcuse. I sat in on Marcuse's class. He taught a class on introductory philosophy. I had read Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy*, so I knew a little bit, but I'd never taken a class in philosophy. So I sat in on his course. He was a very entertaining lecturer, a very interesting guy. I enjoyed it. I can't say I learned all that much, but he was certainly an interesting guy.

But she was his student. Any rally on campus, she was there and she was always the most articulate person. I very much knew who she was. She had no idea, I'm sure, who I was.

And anyway, lots of rallies on campus. William McGill became chancellor at San Diego that year. He stayed at San Diego for a couple of years; then he moved to Columbia, where he was president of Columbia for a decade or two. And it's an interesting story, so I'll take a brief sojourn into this story.

Years later, he wrote a book called *The Year of the Monkey: Revolt on Campus, 1968-69*, which was his description of his first year as chancellor at San Diego, during the year of protests about nearly everything, and how difficult it was to step in as chancellor at that

time. In the book, there's an interesting little vignette or story where he describes being in the plaza at Revelle College during some protest. Everybody's yelling at him and he can't get a word in edgewise. People are screaming at him left and right. And he said, "Finally some guy with a scraggly looking beard, on the outside of the crowd, shouted, 'Let's let the guy talk. Let's hear what he has to say.'" He said that gave him a chance to say something. That moment, he felt was a turning point for him. I read that years later. And, of course, I knew who that scraggly beard was. It was my friend Jay.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, wow. My goodness.

Blumenthal: I remembered the incident well. So it turns out, some years after that, fast forwarding, I had dinner at Dick Atkinson's house, when he was still president of UC. And I'm not sure how it came up—it was an Academic Council dinner with Dick Atkinson. Everybody was leaving and had left. Somehow I was chatting with Dick and this issue came up, so I stayed way behind after everyone else had left. I mentioned to him some of this book. I have no idea why the subject ever came up. Of course, he had been the chancellor at San Diego, so he knew San Diego well. But it turned out that William McGill was his college roommate, and his good buddy. I told him the story about this incident in the book, and I told him that I had written to McGill. I actually had written a note to McGill telling him who this person was. McGill never acknowledged it, and he died a year or two later. So I had more or less put that aside. I told Jay the story. But Atkinson was fascinated by it and wanted to talk more about that year and McGill and stuff. So I stayed behind and chatted with him for, I don't know, a half hour or so.

When I left and went out to my car—this was in Kensington, at the president's official residence—the gate was closed. I had this panic—what the hell am I going to do if the gate

is closed and locked? Well, it was an automatic gate, so it opened. I didn't know— I'm often very naïve in things. Maybe I'd never encountered an automatic gate before.

So okay, so it was protests all the time, often Angela Davis speaking at these protests on campus.

Reti: So, George, when you're talking about protests, is it primarily antiwar we're dealing with?

Blumenthal: No. Not entirely.

Reti: Tell me what else.

Blumenthal: Lots of things about the university—I don't even specifically remember—but people are always unhappy about one thing or another. I do remember one of the main controversies that was going on then in the community was about Herbert Marcuse himself because the town of San Diego started an effort to get the university to purge itself from Marcuse, who was a self-avowed Marxist. They said that it was inappropriate for someone like that to be teaching our impressionable young children. And the chancellor, to my mind, was not very clear about policy and his intentions. I remember a friend of mine and I one day walked over to the chancellor's office to see if we could see him to express our view that he needed to be clearer about his views, but he wasn't there. It was just kind of a random thing. But, of course we know principles of academic freedom would have precluded him from doing anything. I'm sure he understood that, but for whatever reasons, he was always, I felt, mushy in the way he talked about this. Now, it may have been that Marcuse was old, and therefore may have been over what was then mandatory retirement age at UC. But it had exceptions, so it may have been that McGill had to provide exceptions every year, or every two years, or whatever. And so, that may have been required of McGill to proactively do something to keep him on the faculty. On the other

hand, I would certainly have argued at the time, and I definitely would argue now, that to make that decision based upon his viewpoint of the world, would have been inappropriate.

Reti: Absolutely.

So, this might have resonances for later in our conversation, but you're referring to this kind of town/gown divide that's going on at San Diego. I would imagine, given how conservative San Diego was, that there were many instances of that.

Blumenthal: Mm hmm. La Jolla was even worse than San Diego because La Jolla was a very rich community. So this Walter Kohn that I mentioned, when he arrived in San Diego as a faculty member—and he was there when the campus opened—he couldn't get a house, because he was Jewish. It took the intervention of the first chancellor at San Diego to actually get him a house within La Jolla.

I forgot to mention my relatives in Beverly Hills. I had these rich relatives in Beverly Hills who I visited every now and then. They told me that when they moved, they had moved to California from Chicago. The first place they looked at was La Jolla and they decided La Jolla was not friendly to Jews. They were not even considering it, so they decided to go to Beverly Hills instead.

Reti: Did you encounter any anti-Semitism as a graduate student living in Mission Bay?

Blumenthal: Nothing that I ever noticed, particularly. To be honest with you, I've rarely experienced anti-Semitism in my life. I can think of only my annoyance, as a student, having to sing Christmas carols in school. And then an incident that occurred years later when I was a faculty member here, when I was visiting the South. I was on a trip with Herman Blake and we visited some center in South Carolina. Maybe it was North

Carolina. It was one of the Carolinas. I think it was North Carolina. It was some kind of support poverty center. We were talking to the director of it and Herman introduced those of us who were with him. When I was introduced, he said, “Oh, that’s a nice Jewish name.” I remember being just dumbstruck when he said that. I was speechless that anyone would say something like that. First of all, it actually isn’t a predictably Jewish name. Blumenthal could be, but in the US, a survey would show a 50/50 chance of being Jewish or not. And secondly, who would care if it’s a nice Jewish name?

Reti: Right. What does *that* mean?

Blumenthal: So I interpreted, but I couldn’t say anything. Well, it turns out Herman heard this and he was furious. So he took this guy aside. And the next day, the guy came over to me and apologized profusely, which was, of course, almost equally awkward. But there was no doubt in my mind that Herman was the one—and I didn’t say anything to Herman. But he was just—

Reti: Yeah. Well, he’s very attuned.

Blumenthal: But those are the only times in my life that I can think of explicit anti-Semitism that I faced. Who knows what was behind the scenes? But it’s not something I’ve worried about. It’s so funny, because my parents worried about it all the time.

So, anyway, that was the Marcuse thing. I’m sure there were other issues on the campus. I just can’t remember what they were anymore, particularly.

Reti: We were talking about the town/gown divide.

Blumenthal: Town/gown, yeah.

Reti: So you have a very military area there, right?

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Isn't there a base that's part of San Diego?

Blumenthal: Yeah. In Oceanside is the marines. And in downtown San Diego, the navy was really big. It was a navy town.

Reti: Yes. So here you are, protesting the war in a navy town, essentially.

Blumenthal: Exactly. So then a few of us got the idea that what we really needed was a protest march through San Diego. (Reti laughs) We had some conversations and decided that we would do this. I don't know how I ended up being the one who did it all, but basically the work to set up this march was all done by the guy who was the campus chaplain. I think he later went to UWM as the campus chaplain because he later asked me about the campus. And me. So we picked a day, the two of us. We went down to the police department. We had this really weird meeting with the police department in San Diego because we said we wanted to have a protest march through downtown San Diego. They didn't even know what the hell a protest march was.

Reti: (laughter) They never had one.

Blumenthal: But they were very nice. There was no hostility with us. We told them that we were going to do everything we could to maintain the peace, but we needed traffic blocked off for these blocks, and we wanted to get a permit to hold a rally in Balboa Park. As I recall, they were remarkably cooperative. They didn't give us any trouble. I'm sure there were some issues, but it wasn't a big deal to get this permit.

We got this permit for a march and so it was on. So we did all this publicity. It wasn't just me. There were lots of people working on it. But for some reason, I ended up being the guy. It's not like I got elected to it. I showed up.

And so the time came. We got as much publicity as we could. On the morning of the peace march, one of the radio stations announced that it had been canceled. (Reti laughs) The coverage was just amazing in that regard.²⁰

But we had ten thousand people marching through downtown San Diego that day.

Reti: That's amazing.

Blumenthal: Ten thousand people. We had monitors. We had appointed and trained a whole bunch of monitors because we wanted no trouble. We wanted none of our people to do anything to people who were watching and we wanted none of them to be able to do anything to us. So that's why we had been so cooperative with the police. We wanted the police to be partners in keeping this peaceful. They were willing to do this. And it was a peaceful march.

It was weird because I led the march with this reverend. We were in front. At that point, I had a girlfriend, who was not particularly antiwar, I might add, but she went along. I don't know that I can find the picture anymore. But there was a picture of the march, and we were in the front. I remember seeing it in one of the alternative newspapers.

Reti: Oh, not in the main San Diego newspaper.

Blumenthal: I have no idea whether it was in the main San Diego paper, because I wasn't reading that paper by then.

So we led this march and we went to Balboa Park. There was a rally and there were speakers. I wasn't a speaker, of course. But it was real life. I was so proud. We actually did it.

Reti: That's fantastic.

Blumenthal: And got ten thousand people to come. I remember marching through downtown San Diego. There were people watching us. We marched past one of the radio stations or TV stations and there were people out on the steps watching us. They were quizzical. They just couldn't imagine why anyone would do such a thing. But we did it.

Before the march began, earlier that morning, I had driven down with a colleague, another graduate student. And by way of background, throughout my time in San Diego, my car was always registered to either my father or my mother. When I was in Wisconsin and I bought a car, we all agreed that they would buy the car but I would pay for it. But the advantage of them buying the car was that it was on their insurance and it was overall cheaper than if I had bought the car.

Reti: Right. A young man.

Blumenthal: That's right. So the car was registered to them and I never changed the registration. In fact, I found it really hard to deal with the California DMV. When I first moved to San Diego, I wanted to get a driver's license, and I couldn't. The reason I couldn't was because, first of all, it was illegal to drive for more than a month at that time with an out-of-state license if you'd moved. But, because I was twenty years old, I needed the signature of my adult parents who had to be residents of the state. I felt like I was caught in a catch-22, where I needed a license but couldn't get a license. So I ended up just driving with my Wisconsin license until I was twenty-one, and then I got a California license. But I really minded that I was caught in this catch-22 situation where nothing I did was legal.

Reti: You were trying to do the right thing.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

So anyway, I kept the Wisconsin plates on my car, which was also nice, because I didn't pay parking tickets because this was before the states had mutual agreements. And my friend had Connecticut plates. So the next morning, when the *San Diego Union Tribune*, the *Union* or *Tribune*—they didn't used to be the *Union-Tribune*, as they are now, they used to be the *Union* and the *Tribune*— I'm not sure which one—but one of them wrote, "Outside agitators came from as far away as Wisconsin and Connecticut to organize this peace march."

Reti: Oh, gosh, yeah. (laughter) Looking at your car. That's great.

Blumenthal: (laughs) So anyway, it went off well. I was very proud of having done it. There were, of course, subsequent marches and rallies, but I never played a big part in any of them after that. I felt like I had done my thing. It had been so much fun to do. That's how I was spending my time when Bob was off in Australia.

Reti: Right. So then you had to go back to being a full-time grad student.

Blumenthal: That's right.

So the other thing I did that year, of a more political nature was—and I'm not sure how this even began—but I was talking with some other students. By that time, I had several friends who were law students at USD, the University of San Diego. There was my friend, Don, and his roommate, who I wasn't really close with, but who I talked to a lot. And there was another guy, Robert Wilson, who was also a student there, who I'd become friends with, who later on ended up being a state senator from the area. He authored some of the legislation on recognizing farm workers' unions. Then he ran for Congress and lost. For many years, the congressman from San Diego, a very conservative guy, was named Robert Wilson. So, when my friend ran to succeed him, he used to say, "Bob Wilson says, vote for

Bob Wilson,” which, of course, wasn’t really an endorsement from the previous congressman. But he lost anyway. It was still pretty conservative.

Anyway. Sorry, I got off on a tangent. So I was friends with all these law students, but I also had talked to a number of people on campus and they felt that there was a lack of respect for civil liberties and what it meant. I had, by then, become quite active in the American Civil Liberties Union. I’d joined them, stayed with them for many, many years. So I thought the campus should offer a course with visiting lecturers on civil liberties issues. Somehow I got to talking to the assistant provost of Revelle College about this and he was supportive. So we held some meetings. They wanted to have somebody who was a lawyer organize it. So I had met Bert Lazerow, who was then a law professor at USD. So I asked him if he was interested, and he was. He later on wound up becoming the dean of the law school at USD. So we had this group together. Then we met with Paul Saltman, who you may have heard of, one of the early deans at San Diego, at Revelle College. He organized it and the course actually happened.

Paul Saltman is an interesting character. He was, at the time, the dean of Revelle. He was a no-nonsense administrator. He was quite good. He later rose to become an executive vice chancellor (EVC) at San Diego. He was basically let go as EVC by one of their chancellors. But Saltman had been so popular with the faculty that the campus faculty voted no confidence in the chancellor. I think the chancellor was a guy named William McElroy. And that’s why that vote of no confidence occurred.

What made Saltman even more interesting, was that many years later, one night I was at home watching TV late at night, which I do too much of. I was watching a rerun of Groucho Marx, *You Bet Your Life*. On Groucho Marx was this young assistant professor of biology named Paul Saltman. It was the same guy. Groucho had so much fun with this

serious academic on this show. It was hilarious. Saltman was trying to explain what a professor does, and of course Groucho was hilariously funny about it.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: So it's a classic episode of Groucho Marx. It was just by chance that I happened to see it. Anyway, sorry I got off on that. So that was another thing I did during that year. I did a lot of stuff that year, and much of it wasn't physics-related.

Reti: Was there any kind of criticism from your department for your activism?

Blumenthal: Nobody knew what the hell I was doing because A, I was on a fellowship, so I wasn't accountable to anyone for the income; B, I was working a little bit on this article with Bob while he was in Sydney. By the end of the year it was done. We published it and it became a very well-known article.

Blumenthal: By the way, one other aspects of those days I should mention is the social impact of the draft. Fortuitously, because I graduated college in three years, I entered graduate school at a time when graduate students were given five years of student deferments. But students entering graduate school the year after me got only one year. This led to great consternation and fear among graduate students. This was still before the lottery. I read up a lot on the selective service laws and helped steer other students toward the resources they would need to avoid being drafted.

Some students went to extreme measures to avoid being drafted—things like getting a full set of braces (rubber bands and all) or finding a psychiatrist who would write a letter saying they were seriously mentally ill. I shared an office with one student, Ken Nordsieck, who was losing weight to drop below the draft guidelines and another, Al Tumulillo, who was actually gaining weight to get out of the draft. My officemates and I did research on

what footwear, clothing, and fluid intake would maximize each of their chances. It was surreal. One summer morning, Ken walked into the office wearing his army surplus coat, looking emaciated, and carrying his lunch, which consisted of carrots and celery. A few minutes later, Al walked in, belched, and said “I just had two chocolate banana splits for breakfast.” Ken looked at him like he was from outer space. After their physicals, they each achieved a 1Y classification, but that opened them up to retesting in six months. Ken suffered from malnutrition and decided to take a different approach in the future. Al continued his strategy though some years later he told me he was considering being drafted so he could radicalize the army from the inside, an idea I strongly urged him not to pursue. I don't know what he ultimately did.

As for myself, I finished my dissertation a little before I was twenty-five. But I was quite knowledgeable about how to delay the draft process, so through a series of appeals and changes of venue, I delayed my final 1A classification until after my 26th birthday, after which the selective service no longer drafted people.

Dissertation Research

Reti: So today is Monday, July 30, 2018. This is Irene Reti here with Chancellor Blumenthal for our fourth interview in the oral history that we're doing together. Today we're going to start by talking some more about your graduate years at UC San Diego.

Blumenthal: So the fourth year of graduate school came around. I realized I had to get serious. Now my advisor was back. I was in good shape financially in that I still had my National Science Foundation graduate fellowship. I think I was able to even renew it at the end of my fourth year, but I only stayed for one more quarter. So I was kind of independently supported. I wasn't dependent on grants or anything like that, which was a big advantage. So I didn't feel guilty at not having done much during the third year. In

fact, today I would say that it was really good for me. It gave me a level of mental health, by thinking about other things, that I would not have been able to achieve if I had been fully nose-to-the-grindstone during that period. I think, in general, that's a good thing for students.

The other thing I would comment on is, as I mentioned before, at the end of my second year, I took this departmental exam—four days of written exams followed by an oral exam—and I did it six months early. When those exams were over, even though I did fantastically well, there was a letdown. I think of it as the post-exam blues. And I suffered that, just like I've seen it suffered by many other students over the years. You work so hard for something and then you get it, and then you question: is this really what I want to do? And in a way, some of the political stuff I did during the third year was an effort to reach out and think about what else I might be doing in some kind of weird way. I wouldn't have been able to say that at the time, but I think it was true.

So Bob came back and then I had to do a dissertation. That was an interesting experience, choosing what the right thing to do was. I had done work with him, and we had written a *Review of Modern Physics* article on high-energy particles. He was the kind of advisor who would suggest projects. So he didn't just tell me to go off and find something to do, although probably, I could have done it. But I certainly did it better with his direction.

His first idea was one that I'm really glad I didn't do. (laughter) It had to do with some process in the interior of stars like the sun and calculating a correction factor that might affect stellar evolution. I would have found that deadeningly boring. I don't even remember why we abandoned the idea. I never really did any work on it, but he abandoned it, I think partly because he had another student who had come from France and done some work with him and then had gone back to France for a while, and then

decided not to come back. The project this other student had worked on kind of was left hanging, so he suggested I work on that. And that was to look at how photons interact with each other. Photons are quanta of light and it is possible for two photons to collide, and in this case, produce an electron positron pair. It's important, because very high-energy gamma rays traverse the universe and there's low-energy radiation around in the universe. That could serve as a way of attenuating the beam of high-energy gamma rays. So I did indeed do some work on that, looking at how it worked, and particularly worked in the large-scale universe. So if you look at distant quasars, or very distant objects, how that attenuation worked.

I got interested in another problem at that time. I think I had thought it up and, of course, it went nowhere. But it was interesting. I was interested in how radiation interacted with very hot matter, like x-ray temperature matter, and what you could learn from that as radiation passed through such matter. I started working on it. And unbeknownst to me at that time, that work was already done by two Russians: Yakov Zeldovich, a very, very famous Russian scientist, and his student, Rashid Sunyaev.²¹ They'd written a series of papers. They'd been published in Russian, but I hadn't seen them yet. When they were translated and I saw them, I realized—although usually, what Bob always told me and what I've told students over the years, is seldom does anyone do exactly what you would have done—they did exactly what I was going to do.

Reti: Really. That's remarkable.

Blumenthal: So I abandoned the project. It's ironic. I met both Zeldovich and Sunyaev later in life. I never much liked Zeldovich, but I really liked Rashid Sunyaev. In fact, later on he and I wrote some papers together, and I was delighted to have an opportunity to do that. I really did, and actually still do, very much like and respect Rashid. He ended up

being one of the few famous Russian scientists of my generation who elected to stay in Russia after the walls came down and perestroika. Almost every other Russian I knew came to the US, at least among the top-notch Russians. But Rashid was married to a doctor and he had a child whom I believe had hemophilia. So they really wanted to maintain the healthcare that was available.

So I abandoned that project. Then one day Bob came to see me and said, “Look, here’s a paper written by a guy named Ken Greisen at Cornell on high-energy cosmic rays, and the limitation of how far they can go in the universe. And he did a really crappy, back-of-the-envelope calculation. You could do much better.” So I took the paper; I read it; I was excited by it. And indeed, I redid his calculations, but much, much better. So I wrote the definitive work on the physics of that. It was an interesting experience because it required me to use quantum electrodynamics, which is the quantum mechanics of how electrons and radiation interact.

And I struggled. I struggled because there were some formulas that I needed that were in a textbook, but I couldn’t reproduce them. And I couldn’t reproduce them by a factor of two. I finally, in fact, concluded that one of the key textbooks was wrong by a factor of two. It took me a long time to figure that out.

The other reason I struggled was I needed something a little bit different than what was in the textbooks. I needed a different way of writing those equations. I finally found a paper that did exactly what I needed, but it was in Italian. So the one time in my life I really needed to read a paper in a foreign language, it was some old paper written in the forties in Italian. But it had done the calculation in exactly the way I needed it. I struggled, and I finally got my officemate, who was Italian, to translate it for me.

Reti: That’s handy. (laughs)

Blumenthal: That was very handy. Finally, I figured all of that out and did the calculations. And having done it, Bob did a really good thing. He said, “Okay, you’ve done this great calculation, but what are the implications of it for the large-scale universe?” So I thought about the implications for the large-scale universe, and included that in the paper. It was kind of a fun project, and one I was very proud of.

Reti: When you say large-scale, you mean as opposed to on the quantum level?

Blumenthal: No, no. I’m sorry. The point is that we observe crashing into Earth very, very high-energy particles. We’re not talking about particles of the energy that you produce in particle accelerators. Those are picayune compared to the energy of these cosmic ray particles. These particles have an energy that if I took this iPad and I dropped it from the ceiling to the floor, and I took all of this energy in the iPad, and I concentrated it into one proton, that’s how much energy these cosmic rays have. They are super-duper high-energy. No one understood—in fact, to this day no one understands—what produces them. But we do measure them, and they do exist. We measure them because they crash into the earth’s atmosphere and interact with the earth’s atmosphere and create a shower of particles that we can detect at ground level.

Reti: All the time?

Blumenthal: All the time.

Reti: Okay. Like as we’re sitting here, this could be happening.

Blumenthal: As we’re sitting there. The very highest energy ones are sufficiently improbable that you don’t see them very often, but they do exist. And so the point was I calculated what happens when those particles traverse the background radiation in the universe and they interact with the photons. They’re very low-energy photons, but even

though they're very low-energy photons, in the frame of reference of this super-duper fast-moving particle, those low-energy photons are super-duper high-energy gamma rays and so they can do all these interactions that gamma rays can do. So I became something of a specialist in how you use relativity theory, plus photons, plus high-energy particles to work this kind of stuff out.

So what I calculated for the physics calculation was how far these particles can travel through the universe. Some of them can travel most of the way across the universe. So part of what I calculated is what happens as the universe evolves—because the universe is expanding—so how the expansion of the universe and its earlier history might have affected the spectrum of these particles. I used that to provide limits on when they may have been produced. So that was a key part of what became my dissertation.

Another thing that I did was kind of a strange paper. This little project that Bob had given me when I first started working with him, was to solve for what happens to high-energy electrons when they suffer a discrete change in energy. That is to say, it's often the case for an electron, it will have a high energy but it will slowly decay to lower and lower energies. But when an electron is very, very energetic, it can emit a photon that has an energy almost equal to the electron's energy. So instead of slowly decaying in energy, it will jump down to a lower energy in one fell swoop. And no one had set up the equations, nor solved them, for how you would calculate the distribution of those electrons.

So I set up the equations. That was easy. I didn't succeed at the time we'd written our *Review of Modern Physics* paper on how to solve them, or what the solution was. Somehow—I mean, I'd kept working on this—somehow I'd gone to enough mathematics books that I somehow managed to get a solution. It was very clever. It was a trick that I used. It was very, very clever. But I just lucked into it. Since I found a solution, I wrote a

paper on how you solve those problems and I published it in *The Physical Review*, which is a major physics journal, and then promptly forgot about it.

Thirty years later, I was in some seminar and somebody was talking about something similar and said, “Oh, he was motivated by this paper by some guy named Blumenthal.” (laughter) I couldn’t believe it. This guy knew more about my paper than I did. I couldn’t remember it that well anymore.

Reti: You were under twenty-five years old when you’re publishing these articles. You’re still in graduate school.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: That’s remarkable.

Blumenthal: He remembered it, but I never thought it was a major result at the time. And then I also did some stuff on *bremstrahlung* from protons. That’s a fancy word. Normal *bremstrahlung* is an electron comes in, hits an atomic nucleus, and emits radiation. Big deal. Well, it turns out for a high-energy proton coming in, it can also hit an atomic nucleus. It will interact with the electrons and the atom and produce radiation. But it’s a little different, because you have to look at it from the frame of reference of the proton, rather than from the frame of reference of the atom. So again, you need to do these relativistic transformations to get it right.

So I calculated the proton *bremstrahlung* radiation. I finished a few of these papers. Then Bob called me into his office one day and said, “Well, you’ve written several of these papers. Put them together into one document and make it your PhD thesis.” So I said, fine.

Meanwhile, I was working on yet another paper. This one was really not under his supervision. It's probably worth mentioning. I'd been talking with a post-doc there by the name of Ken Brecher, who later went on to a successful career at Boston University.²² Ken and I started looking at the issue of magnetic fields in the universe. People had written a couple of papers arguing that there was evidence for a large-scale magnetic field in the universe. So we looked at that evidence and we concluded that there was no way that it was evidence, that their analysis was very, very poor. And we also realized that we should think more deeply about how magnetic fields originate in the large-scale universe. So we wrote a paper which turned out to be one of the very first papers. It's frequently cited as one of the key originating papers. It was a very short paper and wasn't that big a deal, but we were among the first to think deeply about it. We wrote this little paper about the origin of magnetic fields in the large-scale universe.

And then we had this experience. Bob was fine with me working on it with Ken, but he wasn't involved. This wasn't his thing. We were ready to submit it, and Ken said, "I have to go talk to Geoff Burbidge about this." Geoff was kind of the senior guy, the leader of the group. And we had this really, from my perspective, horrible conversation with Geoff.

So we made an appointment to go see him, to see Geoff. We went and we described the paper. And throughout the entirety of the conversation, Geoff ignored me. I mean, he literally—no matter what I said, he would simply ignore everything I said, to the extent that if he spoke at all, it was with Ken. It was one of the most demeaning experiences I'd ever had in my life. I was really angry and upset. As we walked out of the room, I was covered in perspiration. I was just, you know—Ken knew it. Ken and I talked about it afterwards. It was not inconsistent with Geoff's kind of unwillingness to acknowledge graduate students. I mentioned earlier about the lunches. But it was really quite a shocking experience. I was quite shaken by it.

Reti: That's terrible.

Blumenthal: Anyway, we submitted the paper and it was accepted and published and I was very pleased. But again, at that point, Gould said, "Put your thesis together, and just stitch them together somehow into one big document and that will be your thesis." Then he said his famous line of, "One hundred pages equals one PhD."

So I said to him, "So if I write two hundred pages, will you give me two?" (laughter)

I set about writing my dissertation. In those days, typing up a dissertation, particularly a scientific dissertation with a lot of math, was no small matter. I didn't really care all that much about the dissertation, per se, so I made a decision, which was legal in those days, to have it typed, but write in the equations by hand because it's really hard for typists to do equations.

Reti: Oh, I can't even imagine. (laughs)

Blumenthal: This was in the days of typewriters. I mean, I didn't care what it looked like. I did all the research to decide this was legal. I knew that the library at UC San Diego in those days was remarkably sticky about having everything come out right. But what the hell. That's what I decided was the most effective way to do it. So Bob's secretary basically typed my dissertation and I wrote in the equations.

Meanwhile, I needed a job. I had no idea how that was going to happen. Bob felt that I should go to the University of Minnesota. There was a group there that he was very close to that did a lot of work. I had no objection. So he had me submit an application there. I did. And they rejected it. (laughs) For all I know, they didn't have money. I don't remember what the reason was. So I didn't have a job.

Then he put me in touch with Wallace Tucker, at a company called American Science and Engineering. So I need to explain this a little bit. Let me backtrack a bit. 1962 was a key date in x-ray astronomy because two relatively young Italian astrophysicists working out of MIT sent up a rocket above the earth's atmosphere. It wasn't a satellite; it was just a rocket. It was up there for five minutes. It had an x-ray detector. The goal was to detect x-rays from the moon. People had already detected x-rays coming from the sun. But the idea was the solar wind hits the moon, and it should shine in x-rays, and you could detect it. So they were looking for x-rays from the moon. And it failed. They didn't see any x-rays from the moon. But they did see two x-ray sources from outside the solar system. And they did see a background of x-ray radiation from outside the solar system.²³ That was the birth of x-ray astronomy. These two young guys were Riccardo Giacconi and Herb Gursky. They were involved in starting a company with a guy from MIT named Bruno Rossi to do x-ray astronomy. It was just a company that did astronomy. They would get contracts from the federal government, and they would carry out those contracts.

Well, by the late sixties or early seventies, they got a contract to launch the first satellite devoted to x-ray astronomy, which was later called Uhuru, because it was launched from Africa.

Reti: No connection with *Star Trek*.

Blumenthal: No connection with *Star Trek*. It was just honorific because it was launched, I think, from Kenya. So they were going strong by the end of 1970, the beginning of 1971. Wally Tucker became their house theorist, and he did theoretical astrophysics with them. Wally had been a graduate student at San Diego, as well, before me. We didn't overlap. He graduated just around the time that I arrived. He had come, I think, in the first class when the campus opened and he had decided he wanted to work with a guy

named Eckart who was there. It was the Eckart of the so-called Wigner-Eckart theorem in quantum physics. But it turned out nobody had gone and talked to the Burbidges. So the department chair made him not work for Eckart, but go work with the Burbidges. And working with the Burbidges really meant, once Bob Gould arrived, working with Bob Gould. So Gould knew him well, although he wasn't his official advisor; he was his de facto advisor. He talked to Wally and Wallace suggested that I come out for an interview.

So I flew out to Boston. I was ambivalent about working for a company, etcetera, but I was willing to give it a shot. I remember it was a very interesting day of interviews. Wallace was really enthusiastic about hiring me. Herb Gursky, who was the head of the group there, was out of town. And Giacconi, I think, was out of town as well when I arrived.

So I gave a talk on the magnetic field stuff, which annoyed Bob a little bit, because he would have preferred I speak on other aspects of my research. I just made a decision on what would excite them. So it was a pretty good visit. I was very harried. In fact, I remember it was really kind of striking because I visited my old girlfriend who had moved to Boston. So seeing her and combining that with this day of interviews was a bit much.

Reti: (laughs) Yeah.

Blumenthal: But I thought it had gone well. And at the end of the day, Wallace offered me a job. I said I was happy to take it.

So I flew back. But I still had to do the finishing work on my dissertation. Then within a week, I got a call from Herb Gursky, who was officially the president of the company. Herb and I talked, and basically it was clear we were talking at cross purposes. I kind of indicated to him I thought I had a job offer. And he indicated to me that I did not have a job offer and that that was still to be decided. So okay. I said, "Fine. Make up your minds. Let me know."

I kind of stayed silent and a few weeks later, I got a rather irritated call from Wallace saying, “Why haven’t I heard from you?” So I explained to him what had happened. And he was annoyed. He said, “You have a job offer. I will confirm that. Don’t worry. You have a job offer.”

So in fact, it did come. It was official. I accepted it and I prepared myself to go move to Boston, which seemed exciting to me.

And all went well in finishing my dissertation, trying to get it all written up. I had a lot of stress near the end. I had to pack up my apartment. I had to pack up my office. I had to finish the dissertation. It was really stressful. First of all, I had to take the defense, which wasn’t much of anything. But once I’d successfully defended it, I had to take it over to the library and they were notorious for rejecting what you give them, you know, if there was a smudge or anything out of the margin. They had these margins you had to stay within. I’ll never forget that. I was really nervous. I went over to the library. I had my dissertation. And the guy there really seemed like one of these anal people, really uptight about everything. So he takes my dissertation and he plops it down and starts paging through it backwards, looking at every single page. And as he’s paging through it, every now and then he’d pull out a page and put it in crosswise. Then he’d keep going. He maybe had twenty pages crosswise before he got to the front. He got to the front, and he was reading my preface and dedication. He said to me, “Oh, you’re from Milwaukee?” I said, yeah. He said, “What high school did you go to?” I said Washington. He said, “I went to Washington High School, too. That’s really cool.”

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: Then we chatted for a minute about Washington High School. And then he took the dissertation and he made the pages the same direction again. He said, “This is fine. This is perfectly acceptable.”

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was really weird. It was so weird. (laughs) But I took it.

And then the other thing that happened just before, literally, like two days before I was scheduled to leave, Bob called me into his office and said, “There’s a job at Santa Cruz.” He said, “Actually, there’s two jobs at Santa Cruz. There’s a post-doc position and there’s a faculty position. And you’re one of the three finalists for the faculty position.”

Reti: But you hadn’t even applied. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I had not, didn’t even know it existed.

First Encounters with UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Had you even heard of Santa Cruz?

Blumenthal: Yeah, actually, I’d been here. Maybe I should say a word about that. So let’s pause, put a pin in this.

So it was probably late ‘68 or early ‘69. I wasn’t really well-connected yet with the astronomy group. I was working with Bob and I only knew some of the students well. But one day I was out on a date, like a first date with this person who was going to be my girlfriend for the next year, although we didn’t know that at the time. We were at a restaurant having a cup of coffee. And Don Cox, one of the advanced students who I didn’t know very well, happened to come in. He saw me and he came over. And he said, “Are you coming to the Santa Cruz meeting?”

I said, “What are you talking about?”

He said, “There’s a meeting of all of the UC astronomers at Santa Cruz and graduate students are invited.”

I said, “Well, yeah, I guess I’ll come.” So that’s how I found out about this meeting in Santa Cruz. So on the appointed day, we did this elaborate travel arrangement where I drove two other students to, I think it was Los Angeles, or it may have been Santa Barbara, and then left my car there and drove up the rest of the way with Don and his wife. They had a big van.

That was quite an interesting trip because this is the only time this ever happened to me—we were driving north of San Diego and I had these two grad students with me, Malcolm Walmsley and Giacomo Cavallo. We were stopped by a road block of ICE, or the predecessor of ICE [the INS], which they can legally do within a hundred miles of the border. So had to stop and some guy leaned in the car and said, “Where were you guys born?” I said Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Giacomo said Turin, Italy. And Malcolm said Dublin, Ireland. Then he corrected himself. He said, “Oh, actually, that’s wrong. I wasn’t born in Dublin. I was born in Calcutta, India,” which sounded kind of weird, even to me.

So the officer said, “Well, with this combination, I’m going to have to ask you to get out of the car.” We had to exit the car. I just had to show my driver’s license. He wanted to see their papers. Of course, they didn’t carry them with them everywhere in the US. So, what ensued was a long argument with Malcolm and Giacomo about what their obligations were with regard to carrying identification. But those are not two people you’d want to argue with. (laughs)

Meanwhile, one of the officers came and said, “Can I search your trunk?”

I said, “Fine. You can search my trunk.” But I’m a messy person and my trunk was full of bags of stuff. Some of it was old laundry bags full of dirty laundry.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no!

Blumenthal: It was really disgusting. So he searched my trunk. But other than dirty laundry, he found nothing. And eventually, they let us continue on the trip.

So I came up to Santa Cruz for this meeting. In terms of the meeting, I remember very little of substance except that I was annoyed that for part of the meeting they excluded graduate students. I thought, why let us come all the way up here if they were going to— what are they doing that’s so secret that we can’t participate?

The other thing I remembered about Santa Cruz was the colleges. I walked around a few of the colleges and I was struck by how beautiful it was and the interesting dynamic within a college. I mean, I had no idea. I had come from San Diego, which also has a college structure, but at San Diego, in those days, throughout most of my graduate career, there was only one college, Revelle College. John Muir College started during my last year of graduate school. So, to me, UC San Diego was like one college. But here was a campus with a whole bunch of colleges. They were kind of interesting structurally and students were doing stuff in the quads of the colleges. It was really interesting to kind of walk around and see. And it was clearly a beautiful campus. That was my introduction to Santa Cruz.

So anyway, getting back to the main story, I told Bob I wasn’t interested in a postdoc because I had already accepted a postdoc, but that I would certainly be willing to interview for a faculty position. Again, I maybe need to stop for a minute and explain, how did this happen?

So, at San Diego, one of the faculty, very young faculty there, was Bill Mathews. He's married to Cynthia Mathews.²⁴ At the beginning of my third year, I had taken a class—Bill taught a sequence of graduate classes in astronomy—and so I took the first one of those classes. In fact, the only astronomy course I ever took in my life was the one-quarter graduate course I took from Bill Mathews. It was a good course. I really liked him. I thought he was great. We kind of formed a little bit of a relationship. I sat in on a couple more of his courses, though I didn't take them.

Then Bill started coming around occasionally to ask questions. One of the projects Bill was working on was a very innovative project having to do with relativistic jets, or objects that have jets of material flowing out from them at speeds approaching the speed of light. Bill had an interesting idea—I can't remember exactly what it was, but it had to do with the radiation from those jets. So he came to see me a whole bunch because I understood relativity and how you do radiation from relativistic particles and all of that. I understood that really cold, and he really wasn't that familiar with it. He kind of used me as an advisor on this project, so he'd come to me pretty often. So we developed a good relationship. But that was pretty much it. I never asked Bill, but I'm quite confident that's the only reason that I was being seriously considered as a candidate at UCSC.

Somebody even told me, maybe it was Bob, who the other two candidates were. So I knew who all three were. And at the time, I didn't know any of them, although I soon became friends with one of them, Jon Arons, who later went to Berkeley. Jon Arons is Claire Max's husband. And the other one was the son of a very famous astronomer.

So I decided, what the hell, I'd come up to Santa Cruz and give a talk and do an interview. It was a strange experience, because I didn't take it all that seriously. I didn't really think they were going to offer me a job. This just seemed a little bit surreal. On the other hand,

why should I pass up an opportunity? In fact, I wasn't all that anxious to do it, because I was in such a rush to pack up and get the hell out of San Diego, and this was going to take time away from that. But I decided to do it. I think I may have been encouraged by Bob, as well as my friend Jay.

So I flew up here one morning and Bill Mathews met me at the airport. We drove to Santa Cruz and he took me around and I met a whole bunch of the faculty. It was a little bit embarrassing because I was really ignorant of classical astronomy. One of the big projects at Santa Cruz was something called astrometry, which is the precise measurement of stellar positions. I didn't even know what that word meant, much less know anything about the field. Two of the grand people in astronomy were George Herbig and Albert Whitford.²⁵ I didn't have a clue who either of them was. And in fact, it was embarrassing because when I met Whitford, I think my ignorance came through. Although as I later, years later, as I got to know Whitford, I realized for him, that wouldn't have mattered. He was such a decent, unassuming fellow that that wouldn't have bothered him at all. Many other people, it would have bothered. But somehow, my ignorance came through to him. And then there was also a guy visiting here, Peter [Noerdlinger], who wasn't a faculty member, but he was I think on sabbatical at Santa Cruz. He was probably the person closest to my field.

So anyway, I gave a talk. It generated a lot of questions because I was talking about the high-energy cosmic ray thing and almost nobody knew anything about the subject here. Just as I didn't know anything about the work they were doing, they knew nothing about high-energy cosmic rays. So it was really more like a class, in some ways, than a seminar. But it went very, very well.

After the seminar, Bill and Cynthia had me over to dinner with [Professor of Astronomy] John Faulkner and his then-wife, Jean. I don't remember if anyone else was there. It may have just been us. We had a very pleasant dinner. I had arranged a flight back that night. Bill kept saying, "Why don't you stay over? Why don't you stay over?" I kept saying, "I can't. I've really got to get down to San Diego."

So finally we left and Bill got lost on the way to the San Jose Airport. (laughs) He literally got lost, so I missed my flight. Again, he offered to let me stay over, but I didn't want to. So he drove me up to SFO and I caught what used to be called the midnight flyer. PSA [Pacific Southwest Airlines], which used to be an airline. They always had a midnight flight from San Francisco to San Diego.

You're looking confused.

Reti: Well, I have questions to ask you—

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: —but I didn't realize this was a bit fly-by-night, so to speak, interviewing experience. What did you know about Santa Cruz as a different sort of institution? In your interview, did questions come up about the philosophy and history of Santa Cruz, the emphasis on undergraduate teaching, for example, or the colleges? Or was it really focused on your research and how your research would benefit the board—

Blumenthal: It was entirely focused on research. There was almost no discussion of the university writ large. That's an issue I'll come back to a little bit later. It's kind of the cultural mismatch between my department and the rest of the campus. But no, I don't remember any significant discussion of that. I'll even come back to that relatively soon with another story. I was aware that there were colleges. And I knew this was a different

kind of place, which was generally appealing, sight unseen. But I didn't know a lot at that time.

So I flew back to San Diego, finished packing up, got in my car, and drove, I guess first to New York. My mother was then living in New York, my mother and my sister. I visited them for a couple of days and then drove to Boston.

Final Period as a Graduate Student

There were a couple of other clean-up things on graduate studies that I should just make sure I cover, if that's okay. I just want to make sure I went through everything in my notes. Oh, yeah, I don't think I mentioned, but when I was in San Diego, somehow the campus decided they wanted student representatives. They wanted a student representative from every department. They were trying to form basically what we would today call the GSA. Every department was supposed to have a student rep. Here, at least in my department, the student rep sits with the department in department meetings. Then, that wasn't the case. But at least there was somebody that was the official student rep.

Somehow I got chosen. I don't remember particularly wanting to do it. But my name went forward and somehow I was elected to this. It wasn't a big political thing. But I did that. I think I did it for a couple of years, and tried to do it in a way that was consistent with my own ethics as a student and as a person. There were ethical challenges. One of those ethical challenges had to do with the fact that some of our graduate students had been sent off to distant laboratories, like Brookhaven lab, for literally years at a time. Then they would be brought back to San Diego, take their exam, which they should have taken at the end of their second year. It wasn't uncommon for them to fail the exam because they'd been so far away from class. And they would be kicked out of school. So they were like slave labor.

It was the particle physics group, that was the group that did it. The head of the particle physics group was a guy named Oreste Piccioni.²⁶ Oreste Piccioni was probably a very good particle physicist. Years later, he actually sued Chamberlain at Berkeley, this guy who won the Nobel Prize for discovering the anti-proton. He sued him, arguing that he, Piccioni, should have shared in that Nobel Prize because he really did the work that led to the discovery. His suit did not get very far.

But Piccioni was a very assertive person. I never interacted much with him personally. He was the kind of person I would stay away from and the kind of physics he did was not physics that interested me. But he was a real character. He had a lot of money and he employed a lot of students. One of the students he employed was a friend of mine named Bill Dallas, who was in my class. Bill was a really nice guy, and he wanted to be a particle physicist. After his first year, he went to work with Piccioni. Piccioni sent him off to Brookhaven and he was never heard from again for a long, long, long time.

So one of the things I tried to do, as the departmental representative, was to get the department to agree that all students had to be prepared to take their exam by the beginning of their third year, which meant that they had to have an opportunity to take the courses they needed, and they had to be brought back to take that exam. That was what I wanted the department to do. I raised it and I got nowhere. Behind closed doors, Piccioni must have pushed back very, very hard. I kind of heard informally that nobody wanted to take him on.

I was very frustrated. So (laughs) at the same time, I and a couple of other students, were starting a journal club in astronomy and astrophysics. Every week we would give a talk on some recent paper. We decided, at least at first, that we wouldn't allow faculty to attend. It was only for students, by students, for students, although we later broke down. When

Bill Mathews said he wanted to come, we let him come. Really, what we didn't want was Geoff Burbidge there.

So anyway, we started the journal club. Then I had this brilliant idea. I entitled it the William Dallas Memorial Lecture. I started this rumor that Bill was dead.

Reti: (laughs) Off in the research salt mines.

Blumenthal: So all over the department, every week, we would advertise the William Dallas Memorial lecture, named after a graduate student who was sent off to Brookhaven National Labs and never heard from again.

Reti: It's a good use of humor. (laughter)

Blumenthal: And it worked! Eventually people started to notice. Bill was brought back, and he took his exams and he passed them. I think actually in Bill's case, he decided not to go back to Piccioni. He switched departments and went into the applied physics department and he did a dissertation there. But that got Bill back!

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: So it was a good example of an indirect confrontation, but a confrontation nonetheless.

Reti: Yeah, and your first foray, really, into educational administration.

Blumenthal: Right. I guess so. I would have been shocked had you said that, though. Again, I would emphasize when I showed up at graduate school I was so, so naïve. You would not believe it. I mean, much of my life I was naïve compared to my age and my peer group. One example was, soon after Jay moved to Mission Beach, near where I lived, he

invited me over to dinner. So like a clod, I said, “What are we having for dinner?” He said, “Artichokes.” I didn’t have a clue what an artichoke was.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, yeah. It’s not a Midwest dish.

Blumenthal: I thought that artichokes were some kind of sea creature because I knew they only grew out here on the coast.

Reti: That’s great. I like that. I can picture that.

Blumenthal: So I said, “So Jay, how do they catch them?”

Reti: (laughs) Oh, that’s very cute.

Blumenthal: I’ll tell you, four decades later, he still hasn’t let me forget that.

Reti: And now it’s going to be immortalized in your oral history. (laughter)

Blumenthal: Well, I didn’t know. All I knew was that there was a thing called artichoke hearts.

Reti: Oh, yeah. And how do you eat these things? Yeah.

Blumenthal: The other thing, I went to Beverly Hills for holidays to see relatives, these relatives who lived in Los Angeles. They had a house in Beverly Hills. The sister of the wife was not rich. She worked in a factory. She’d always been kind of my favorite distant relative, who I occasionally wrote letters with. I thought she was so cool when I was a kid because she typed letters to me with brown ink. I just thought that was the coolest thing in the world. Anyway, there was also another one who was a relative, I’m not sure I even remember exactly how, who was a schoolteacher.

And finally, the daughter of the couple in Beverly Hills was married. They had a little girl who was, I think when I started out she was just a few years old. She was maybe five or six. They were very nice. They invited me to come visit them every Thanksgiving and every Christmas. It was like going into a different world: to the world of Beverly Hills. For example, they didn't cook dinner. We would go out to the Beverly Hills Hotel for Christmas dinner. Or we would go to Scandia's, which was a very famous restaurant. We would go to these top restaurants for Christmas or Thanksgiving dinner. There would be all these movie stars there. I remember literally bumping into Cesar Romero in the restroom at one of them. I literally bumped into him and almost knocked him off his feet. (Reti laughs) He's a big guy. And I remember Xavier Cugat was there with a couple of his girlfriends. You would see these famous people wandering around. It was so weird.

It did expose me to a different strata of society, which in some ways I found interesting. I never regarded these relatives as being happier than me. I remember thinking, wait a minute, I have an old beat up Chevy and they have a new Cadillac. I have an old black and white TV, and they have a modern color TV. They've got better stuff than me, but it's not that qualitatively different a life. That was important, to realize that it just didn't matter all that much. At a certain point, it becomes marginally better to be richer, even if you're really, really rich. But they were nice people. I enjoyed those visits.

I formed a really good relationship with the girl. She was always hanging out with family. They were always so much older than her, so I think I represented something a little bit closer to her own age. I always had a good relationship with her throughout her life. She passed away now, not too long ago. In fact, she had an interesting life. So, poor little rich girl, she moved to New York and she joined a heavy metal band. Kelly and I visited them. She got married to a really nice guy. We visited them in New York at their apartment in the Village. It's one of those places you walk up the stairs and there's rats and— We got to

their apartment. They kept saying, "Sit down." We didn't want to sit down. And I remember, they were so proud. They had gotten a gig in some local club to play with their heavy metal band. And I thought oh, geez, how many are called and how many are chosen? The chance of making it in that business was nothing.

Well, they made it. Their group became known as the Raging Slab.²⁷ They kind of made it to the second level, or maybe even a little bit above. They were often the openers for the most famous bands. They were on MTV all the time. They did a whole bunch of albums. I bought a whole bunch of their albums. I could not get into their music. I couldn't get into the words of their music when I read it. But I was proud of them for getting it to work.

Reti: And this is your cousin?

Blumenthal: Yeah. They're cousins, probably a couple of times removed. Unfortunately she recently passed away from breast cancer. People get older. To me, she'll always be this little girl who was kind of out of place among all of these old people.

Reti: Yeah. And she found her place.

Blumenthal: She found a place. So I'm really proud of the life she lived, and what she did in life. It was kind of against all expectations. So I think that takes us to the end of San Diego.

Reti: I have a question about your aspirations while you were in graduate school, and what you imagined you would be doing. Did you want to teach?

Blumenthal: Yeah. I wanted to be a professor somewhere. By that time, I was clear about that. And San Diego was a place that was producing graduates who went on to fairly good careers, in many cases. They had a high success rate. They had a faculty that was really exciting. Someone once told me that at San Diego, everyone they hired they felt had

made some really major contribution to physics, and I think it showed in their department. They had some great names there.

They had people who were not always approachable. I'll add one more story. So during that fourth year—I did a lot of stuff during that fourth year—one of the things I got interested in was pulsars. They had been just discovered the year earlier. Pulsars are these pulses of radiation coming from sources, which we now know are neutron stars, in the universe. When they were first discovered, there were four of them discovered. Their first name was LGM, for little green men. (Reti laughs) But then it was soon realized that they were truly an astronomical phenomenon.

Reti: Not messages from outer space.

Blumenthal: It was relatively soon realized that they were neutron stars, very compact stars that were rotating very fast, emitting radiation from particles in a very, very, very high magnetic field.

So I got interested in the question of what happens when magnetic fields get really, really, really big. I saw a paper that talked about some possible phenomena, one of which was something called photon splitting. The idea is, radiation comes into a region that has a magnetic field and suddenly a photon splits into two photons, which couldn't happen in a vacuum, because you can't conserve energy and momentum. But if there's a magnetic field present which absorbs energy and momentum, then theoretically it could happen.

I thought this would be a really important process to understand pulsars, so I decided to calculate it. I did a full quantum electrodynamic calculation. And it's kind of funny, because the way I did it was just literally paper and pencil, probably filling up twenty-five or thirty pages of calculations to do it. Today, there are symbolic computer programs that will do these in an instant. But not in those days. I did the twenty-five-page calculation.

When it was all done, I finally got to my answer, and the answer was zero. There was no chance of it happening, at least to the lowest order, that is, to the first approximation. I was very puzzled by that, and rather disappointed. But you know, life goes on.

Well, it just so happened, shortly after I did that calculation, a guy named Peter Goldreich, who was then a young faculty member at Caltech, but he was already quite well known, and later rose to great fame as an astrophysicist, one of the outstanding astrophysicists of his generation, he was visiting. He was a good friend of Bob Gould's. I think they both went back to Cornell, or knew each other at Cornell. Anyway, he visited Bob, and I had lunch with them. In the course of the lunch, somehow it came up that he was also interested in the high magnetic fields and photon splitting, and he had also done the calculation, and he had also gotten zero. So I felt really good that that sort of confirmed my results. We got into a little bit of an argument because I said I felt a little bit at a loss because if I was going to get an answer that's zero, there should have been some principle in place that should have told me before I even did the calculation that I was going to get zero. He didn't agree with me, and we had this big argument about it. It was kind of an argument of principle. I said I was also confused because there was a Russian paper that had calculated this and gotten a non-zero answer and that had caused me to doubt whether my calculation was correct, but I couldn't understand the Russian paper. "It's interesting," he said, "I also saw the Russian paper." He said, "I also didn't understand it." He said, "So I took it to Feynman. You know, it took Feynman about two minutes to figure out what was wrong with the Russian paper. And the answer is, the Russian paper was wrong."

So after that lunch, I kind of pondered what he was saying. I wanted to know why the Russian paper was wrong. I was completely incapable of answering that question. So I took it to Norman Kroll. He was a faculty member at San Diego, a well-known particle

physicist. He was the guy who first calculated the anomalous magnetic moment of the electron. I had never talked to the guy, and he was known for being standoffish. But I got up my nerve. I knocked on the door of his office. I came in and I explained to him that there was this Russian paper, and I was pretty sure it was wrong, but I really needed to know why it was wrong. And he basically said get lost. (Reti laughs) So then I said, “Well, Peter Goldreich at Caltech said that it took Feynman only a minute to figure out what was—” (laughter)

It was funny. He said, “All right. Give me the paper.” He looked at it. It took him a little bit longer than a minute. But he finally said, “Oh, yeah. It’s obvious what’s wrong. They used a combination of Schwinger electrodynamics and Feynman electrodynamics. You have to choose one. You could do either one, but you can’t do a combination. That’s fundamentally what they did wrong.”

So I did get the answer to the question. The Russian paper was wrong. And so that was an interesting experience, trying to approach somebody who I didn’t know real well. The irony is, not too long afterwards, there was a very famous guy at Princeton who wrote a paper on photon splitting. He found a principle by which we should have known that the answer was zero, but it was a very complicated principle, and one that I would never have figured out on my own.

Then they calculated what the answer was to higher order. That is, in quantum electrodynamics you do things by what’s called perturbation theory. You calculate the leading term of what would be a series of terms. But you calculate the biggest term. In this case, the biggest term was zero. But you could go on and calculate the next term. I wasn’t particularly anxious to do that, because it’s harder, as you go down to more and more

terms. But they did it, and the next term was not zero. So it is a legitimate process, now a well-known, well understood probability.

Working at American Science and Engineering in Boston

Reti: So, okay. So now you're in Boston, right?

Blumenthal: So now I move to Boston. That was a little bit of a harrowing experience. First of all, I moved there. I struggled to find a place to live, because Boston's very different. I stayed with Wallace and Karen, his wife, for a few days. Then I rented an apartment on Commonwealth Avenue. Literally two days after I moved in—I was still moving my boxes from my car in—there was a big fire. I was asleep. I think I was on the second floor. All of a sudden, there's a pounding on the door and there's a bunch of firemen. They said, "You've got to evacuate the building. There's a fire." I thought, oh, shit. I started to run out. Then I said, "Wait a minute. I've got stuff here. Why don't I save something?" So I ran back into the apartment and looked around desperately. The only thing I could think to save was my tennis hat, (laughter) which was the stupidest choice you could imagine making. But, I mean, I was like in a panic. Ran back out.

As I was leaving, there was this woman who was coming down the stairs with her daughter. She must have been, certainly in her sixties, although I couldn't at that age tell. She was clearly not that well. So I helped her out of the building. We were all literally standing around in the rain as the fire was going on in the building; on the top floor of the building there were flames coming out of the window, and there was a family on the porch outside that window literally screaming to be rescued.

Reti: (gasps) Oh, God.

Blumenthal: Finally they brought up a ladder and brought them down safely. Eventually we were all brought to some Red Cross headquarters, where they gave us coffee and lunch and whatever. It was a bit of a harrowing experience for me, but the woman I had helped outside really enjoyed the excursion. In fact, a day or two later somebody told me, “Hey, I saw you on TV.” (laughs)

Reti: Welcome to the East Coast.

Blumenthal: Welcome to the East Coast. I decided that I needed to get out of my lease. The woman I had helped outside had had a seizure and died upon returning to the building. I couldn’t stay there, so I called my friend, Don Gindy, who was by then a lawyer, a public defender in Los Angeles. We talked about how I could get out of the lease. I went to see the landlord, who was really furious. I told him he should sue me if he didn’t like it—because he hadn’t yet cashed my check. I stopped payment. I moved to another place. Just a really awkward beginning to my time at Boston. We got through it.

But Boston is a hard place to live, or I found it a hard place to live. In Milwaukee, people were friendly. In San Diego, people were sometimes uptight, but they were not unfriendly. In Boston, sometimes people weren’t very friendly. Lots of people were very nice, but it was a very different kind of experience. You’d go into a store in Boston and you weren’t treated with the kind of respect you would be treated with in California. In fact, I remember when I moved out here from Boston. One of my greatest joys when I moved to Santa Cruz was going to Safeway because people were so nice at Safeway.

It took me a while to get used to the traffic, how easy it was to get lost. Driving there—I mean, this was a place where people would honk at you for stopping at a red light. I lived in Boston for a year and a piece, maybe a year and a third. I never saw anyone get a ticket

during that time. Never. Parking or traffic. It was the Wild West as far as traffic and driving went. So that was an adjustment as well.

I was still a very shy person, so it was hard for me to break into the social crowds. The idea of living in a city with all these young people was just so exciting, but it's not like I lived the great social life that I might have envisioned.

Reti: So I just want to clarify something.

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: So when you interviewed at Santa Cruz, were you chosen for the position and turned it down?

Blumenthal: I had heard nothing yet. Remember, I was interviewed a few days before I left.

Reti: And then you went to Boston.

Blumenthal: I went to Boston. And frankly, forgot about it. I know what happened.

Reti: Sorry. I'm probably stealing your thunder.

Blumenthal: Yes, I can answer your question now. I mean, I know what happened. They did offer the job to Jon, which I found out from a variety of different sources, including Jon. He turned it down to take a position at Berkeley. Then they offered it to me.

Reti: Okay, I see.

Blumenthal: So it took a few months. A few weeks later they contacted me, asked me to fill out an official application, which I did. But I wasn't counting on it. I didn't think it was all that likely. And it took so long for them to offer it to me that I started working at

American Science and Engineering. The good news was that I was working with Wallace Tucker, who was just great. I really like Wallace. Always have. I will say— this gets a little bit ahead of the story—but Wallace was fantastic. He had been at Cornell after he graduated from San Diego. They offered him a faculty position there and he turned it down and decided to go to—in fact, maybe he was in a faculty position briefly, but he left and went to AS&E. He was perfect for them. He was a perfect match in terms of the science that he did, his style, everything. It was a match that lasted many, many decades. It's still going on today. He still interacts with the same group. They're now at Harvard.

Reti: Wow. So he's still there. He's still working with them.

Blumenthal: Sort of. I worked with him for the time I was there. But a year or two after I left, he decided to leave and quit what he was doing. And he bought an organic strawberry farm in Fallbrook, outside of San Diego. He and his wife and his two kids moved there and they farmed strawberries.

Reti: No kidding. (laughs)

Blumenthal: No kidding. In fact, I used to visit him. I remember one time I was visiting them and one of our colleagues, Paul Gorenstein, who's also a PhD, who was from Boston, was visiting. The three of us went out there on the side of the road to sell organic strawberries. We were joking around, if only people knew how many PhDs there were selling them these organic strawberries. (laughs)

Reti: Yeah. That's early in the organic strawberry business, too.

Blumenthal: It was very early.

Reti: Very early. He was a real pioneer in that as well.

Blumenthal: So ultimately Wallace started a pattern of working six months on his farm, then going to Boston for six months, and then six months back on his farm. He did that for many, many, many years. I think ultimately he sold the farm. He certainly still works with them. I'm just not sure whether it's full time or not. But anyway, that was his future. But of course I knew none of that at the time. He and his wife were just so, so nice, wonderful people. It was great to interact with them. In the theoretical group, originally it was just him and me. But he quickly hired another guy, an Italian, named Alfonso Cavaliere. I was really excited when he hired Alfonso because Alfonso had written some really interesting looking papers. But when Alfonso came, I came to realize there wasn't as much depth behind it as I might have wished. And, in fact, I didn't really interact in a meaningful way with Alfonso, nor did Wallace, for that matter, during the time he was there. He's now a big professor in Italy somewhere. He's been somewhat successful in terms of the stature he's achieved. But he was not, from my perspective, a major player at the time.

Then partway through the year, Wallace and I went through a meeting of the American Astronomical Society. While we were there, there was a guy, a new PhD from MIT, Al Solinger, who approached Wallace about a job. Wallace didn't have enough money to hire him full time. He had just enough money to hire a half time person. On the drive back from this meeting, he and I had this interesting ethical discussion: is it ethical to offer somebody a half time job if that's all the money you have, or is that exploitation? We debated it back and forth and finally concluded that as long as you're upfront with him, that's his choice to make. Why take the choice out of his hand?

So Wallace did give him the choice. He took the job, and in fact, very quickly worked to become useful to the observational group, which had a lot more money. I think they ultimately put him on full time. His story was very interesting as well. I guess this is

getting slightly ahead. But I got to know Al. He had done some really interesting work. I liked the work that he had done as a graduate student. I liked the work he was doing when he was working with us. But his political views were really strange. If you asked him to describe his political views, he would say he was *trying* to be a communist. (Reti laughs) That's a concept I just could not understand. I mean, I could understand somebody *being* a communist. But I couldn't understand somebody *trying to be* a communist. Well, it turned out that he had been working with the party, and they'd kicked him out, and so he was doing penance by selling their newspaper at street corners every weekend. It was almost laughably crazy, if you know what I mean. I mean, if somebody told me I had to try to join their club, I would tell them to go to hell. But he didn't feel that way.

Anyway, after I left, I came to Santa Cruz, he was still with the company. But by that time, the company was doing more than x-ray astronomy. They were making x-ray machines for airports. They were doing other things. They had factories and he tried to unionize the workers. So the guy who was then the president of the company called him in and fired him and the shit hit the fan because most of us liked Al. I mean, we thought he was a little nuts for taking his political views that he did. But he was a decent guy, a very nice guy, and we liked him. Seeing him summarily fired and kind of booted out the door just didn't sit very well. I was hearing all about this from Santa Cruz, but I was in touch with people. And I remember one person who later on, who years later became the leader of the x-ray group, said the company's treatment of Al Solinger was worse than the Nazis' treatment of the Jews, which was a bit of an exaggeration. (Reti laughs) But you understand what I'm—

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: —how strongly. It did not sit well. I think what happened was, Riccardo Giacconi was out of the country at the time, and so he wasn't there to put a lid on things. He's a very strong personality. When he came back to the country, he did put a lid on it and got people to kind of stop their agitation. Ultimately, MIT decided to hire Al because they felt so sorry for him, because they felt he had been so badly treated by AS&E. So he worked at MIT for a while. Then I lost touch with him. I heard that he became a Gestalt therapist in Florida somewhere, which I find interesting. I don't know what to do with that. But I did like him, and I really felt badly about what happened to him.

These interviews go so fast. I want to push forward.

Reti: So, okay, so you're back in Boston working. And you don't know yet that UC Santa Cruz wants to hire you.

Blumenthal: Right. So while I was in Boston, I worked on some solar physics project, which was really interesting, looking at x-ray emission lines from the sun. I realized that those would be important on other stars as well. That was kind of off my beaten track, but it was really interesting. It actually turned out to be some important work that had broad applicability.

But I also worked on these new exciting things that had been discovered, which were pulsating and variable x-ray sources. So I need to say a word about this. I moved there just after Uhuru had been launched, so everyone was excited. It was an exciting time. The scientific group would meet together on a regular basis, like weekly. I was in those meetings. They were seeing a whole bunch more x-ray sources than had ever been discovered before. This was the earliest days. Again, I don't remember the number, but prior to Uhuru, there might have been ten sources of x-rays known in the universe. After

Uhuru, there were a few hundred. So it expanded our view of the universe dramatically, even though by today's standards, it was a very primitive instrument.

But one day, early on during my time there, there was a visiting scientist from Japan. He was very young. His name was Minoru Oda. He'd come and he was just visiting there for a few months. Later in his life he went back to Japan and became possibly the most eminent astrophysicist of his time. I think he recently passed away. But he did something really unusual. Most of the time they took these data from the x-ray satellite and they just processed them through the computer and got results out the other end. But he decided to actually look at the data. As the data came in, he actually watched it coming in and watched its signal over time. He noticed that for one of the sources, a source named Cygnus X-1, which means it's the brightest x-ray source in the constellation Cygnus, he noticed that the signal was varying, and initially thought that it was a periodic signal, with a period of about, I don't know, ten milliseconds: one one-hundredth of a second.

We had a really exciting meeting of the x-ray group when he talked about this and showed his results. Everyone was excited. Ironically, we wouldn't have found it if he hadn't actually done the stupid thing of actually looking at the data. Everyone was just immensely excited because this was clearly going to be an exciting new phenomenon. So we talked about it for a while. Then Riccardo Giacconi said, "Well, this is a black hole. We've discovered a black hole." I, of course, piped up and said, "That can't be the case. Because why would you expect a black hole to have a periodic signal at ten milliseconds? That doesn't make any sense to me."

He said, "No, it's got to be a black hole."

So I had this little argument with Giacconi—the new guy and the senior leader. But he was convinced, so that's what they went with. I decided not to be heavily involved in this

because I thought this was going down a dangerous pathway. I was skeptical that a black hole would emit a periodic signal.

Well, it turned out, so they published the paper. They still said that they thought it might be a black hole. I think the reasoning was specious. Then they realized the data was wrong. It wasn't really a periodic signal. It was quasi-periodic, which is much more likely to be a black hole. Giacconi wanted one of the theorists to take on the subject, take on the topic of understanding time series analyses of signals. I decided to bow out from that and not take it on. On the one hand, I'm sorry I didn't, because it turned out to be a really wonderful topic for many years to come. On the other hand, I'm not sure I would have been all that interested in it.

Instead, one of their group, a guy named Ethan Schreier took it on, and that was his claim to fame. He made a name for himself doing that work. Ethan's a great guy and I was so pleased that he did that.

They didn't know how massive the object was. They didn't have real evidence that it was a black hole rather than a neutron star, for example. That evidence only came much later. But it turns out Cygnus X-1 was the first black hole discovered. As evidence accumulated, we got evidence that it couldn't be a neutron star or a white dwarf. It was a black hole. So Cygnus X-1 is now the prototype of a binary system that has a black hole in the binary system. Riccardo was right, even though I still maintain that at the time he didn't have the evidence for it. (Reti laughs)

But then, they quickly discovered another class of objects, the prototype of which was Centaurus X-3, the third brightest x-ray source in the constellation Centaurus. That source actually did have a periodic signal. I think the period of Cen X-3 was about five seconds. Unfortunately, Wallace and I wrote some papers saying this could be a pulsating

white dwarf, but we soon realized that that was wrong, that it really was a neutron star in a binary system, and the pulsation was because matter was being funneled onto the poles of the neutron star, which was rotating, so every five seconds, one of the poles would come into your line of sight. That's now very much the accepted model. But these were exciting times. These new discoveries were coming in hand-over-foot.

Meanwhile, AS&E was moving. When I first got there, they were located right next to MIT, partially because they were founded by people from MIT. Then they got big. They started these manufacturing things, x-ray detectors for airports and stuff like that. It wasn't just x-ray astronomy anymore. So they decided to build a new building, which they did, a couple of blocks off of Central Square in Cambridge.

So we moved into the new building and that was certainly interesting. By that time, I had gotten a job offer from Santa Cruz. It threw me for a loop, because I didn't know what to do. Suddenly I found myself a postdoc basically for a company, which was an uncomfortable situation to be in, but actually more remunerative than had I been a postdoc at a university. I had an offer from a major university, and an exciting university. I'd always imagined my life would be two to three years of postdoc, and then go on to a faculty position. But here, I had this faculty position in hand. It was at a time when faculty positions were not all that forthcoming. This was not a good time to be searching for faculty jobs nationally.

Reti: That's interesting. So it was just a few years after it was easy to get a job.

Blumenthal: That's right. Things had turned around.

Reti: You were in that first tightening.

Blumenthal: So I agonized about it a little bit. I was reluctant to talk about it with Wallace, since he was my boss, although I eventually did. But I agonized. I remember, one of the visitors that I saw in Boston was none other than Geoff Burbidge. To Geoff, I was now a person, because I had a PhD. So I remember asking Geoff what he thought. Geoff was completely unhelpful. I mean, he gave me both sides of the story. So I was really struggling with this.

Finally, my friend Jay came to visit. He had been at Cambridge University in England as a postdoc in geophysics. He came and stayed with me for a couple of weeks. I remember I posed this issue to him. And good old Jay basically said, “Are you nuts?!” (laughter) He said, “Come on. You’ve got a great department at a university that’s in the process of being built in a different way with new ideas. You can be on the ground floor in one of the most beautiful areas of the country. You’ll be in Northern California. What more could you ask out of life?” Of course, he was right. This was one time when I did listen to Jay. I decided to accept the offer. Of course, Wallace was disappointed. But we did remain friends. As I say, I used to visit him in San Diego all the time.

I decided I was going to go to Santa Cruz. It was in some ways fortuitous, because little did I know that as a result of all of the Solinger stuff—remember, that was the guy who was fired— the feelings were still very bad among the scientific group. Ultimately, Giacconi and Gursky made a really key decision. They decided to move to Harvard. They got positions at Harvard and they handpicked people to come with them to Harvard, leaving all of the rest at AS&E. Wallace went with them to Harvard, although he soon thereafter became a farmer, so he may not have seen that as a permanent job at the time. He didn’t get a tenured position there. I think there were only four of them that got tenured positions at Harvard. They had more people in the group who came over on

contract money. But it split the group, and it became very quickly an issue of who's going to stay and who's going to move. That would not have been a comfortable place to be.

Reti: No. It sounds like you were spared a very thorny situation.

Blumenthal: Exactly. No insight here; it was just pure, blind luck. But, in fact, the move to Harvard worked. That group is still at Harvard. Giacconi's long retired. My friend Harvey Tananbaum has led that group for many, many, many years now. It's been extremely successful group over the decades, literally, but it had its origins in a private company.

Reti: Hmm. Okay. That's probably a good place to stop.

Coming to the University of California, Santa Cruz:

Lick Observatory and the Astronomy Board

Reti: Today is August 13th, 2018. This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Chancellor Blumenthal for our fifth oral history interview. Today we're going to start by talking about your very early years at UCSC.

Blumenthal: So in fact, it was really quite an experience. I arrived on April first, April Fool's Day, 1972. I drove across the country from Boston. It was completely a new experience for me. But even before I arrived, I knew it was going to be an interesting experience because I had this strange thing happen to me while I was still in Boston. I got a call from John Faulkner, who was then the chair of astronomy. We had kind of a strange conversation, where he clearly seemed a little bit nervous about asking me the question that he was asking me. I couldn't quite figure out what was going on but basically he asked me the question whether or not I felt competent to teach something in a field in which I had no levels of competency. (laughs) He was thinking about college courses. I'm not sure

I even fully understood exactly what he was getting at, but I told him I had just read a book about mathematical ecology, so I could certainly teach a course on ecology. He seemed relieved. I didn't understand why he was relieved but that seemed to satisfy him. So I scratched my head and said, let's get on with life, and we'll figure that out when we need to figure it out.

So let me explain a little bit about how the position I occupied happened. When the campus opened, all of the astronomers from Lick Observatory moved to Santa Cruz. They'd been given a choice. They had been for many years located at the top of Mount Hamilton. That's where their homes and their offices were. But there was a movement within the University of California to move them onto a campus. It was felt it was inappropriate to have these professionals not associated with a UC campus. So after a lot of machinations, they were ultimately given the choice of going to Berkeley, joining the Berkeley faculty, or coming to Santa Cruz, this brand-new campus. They chose the brand-new campus, largely because so many of them were feuding with people at Berkeley, they just couldn't imagine joining the Berkeley faculty. Though, frankly for them, it was quite a cultural shock, when they got to Santa Cruz, to discover the Santa Cruz culture. I'll come back to that later in some detail.

But soon after they arrived, Bob Kraft,²⁸ who was one of the astronomers and a very foresightful person, realized that now we had this astronomy department with, I don't know, ten, eleven, twelve astronomers and no theorists, nobody who did theoretical astrophysics. Now, that wasn't quite strictly true because Peter Bodenheimer was on their faculty and he was a theorist. But they realized that the world was changing. Bob realized that they needed many more theorists.

So he decided to write a grant proposal to the National Science Foundation to hire five new faculty members in theory. Those days (it's not true anymore), the National Science Foundation would give universities grants to hire faculty on the condition that the university agreed, when the grant was over, to pick up their positions and make them permanent.

So Bob brought in a guy to write the grant for him, Ron Saufley. Ron came, and he worked with Bob and they wrote this grant proposal, and it went in to the National Science Foundation, and it was granted. The first person they hired was, in fact, John Faulkner. The second person they hired was Bill Mathews. The third person they hired was Jeff Scargle. The fourth person was Doug Keeley. And the last person was me. I was the final hire on this NSF grant. That's how I ended up in Santa Cruz. And *that's* how I got hired without joining a college as a part of the hiring process.

Reti: Good heavens. That's unheard of.

Blumenthal: Normally, in those days, you were hired jointly by a college and a board. I didn't know anything about that at the time. All I know is that I was interviewed by the board and offered a job. And "board" didn't mean anything for me. I assumed it was just a synonym for department.

So that's how I ended up at Santa Cruz, the last of the five. But it was kind of strange because when I arrived I was like twenty-five years old, much younger than anyone else around. In fact, the people I hung out with were graduate students. One of the graduate students here, Ken Nordsieck, who was a student of Bill Mathews, actually had been a graduate student with me in San Diego. We had shared an office at San Diego. Ken was here, and then another graduate student, Alan Dressler. He was a somewhat older graduate student. He since has become a very, very famous scientist. Those were the

people I hung out with. I'd go to dinner with them, played tennis with Alan Dressler all the time. Those were my friends because I wasn't married. I felt more like a graduate student than I did a faculty member.

The faculty did a lot of entertaining. One of the things that characterized that time, certainly in astronomy, I don't know if it was true across campus, was there were a lot of dinners, a lot of parties, a lot of faculty events. So I went to a lot of dinners. Many of the faculty in astronomy were wine connoisseurs. Certainly Bob Kraft was. John Faulkner was. And then, of course, Joe Miller was the ultimate wine connoisseur.²⁹ He used to teach a course on enology and now he runs a winery, now that he's retired. So there was a lot of wine drinking, which meant very little to me since I'd never developed an appreciation for wine. In fact, there was one incident that made me a teetotaler during that period. I remember going to dinner at Bob Kraft's house in Aptos. Kraft kept serving different wines. I kept drinking like a third of the glass every time they changed the wine. (Reti laughs) By the time I went home, I had a real buzz on. Nothing happened—but when I got home, I realized I should not have driven home. I made a decision then that I was just not going to drink anymore. So I literally don't drink anymore, and haven't since.

But not long after I arrived, I got a note to go see the—it was then called the vice chancellor for science. (In those days, we didn't have deans of science or deans of humanities; we had vice chancellor of science; vice chancellor of social sciences. At a certain point, they changed the names to make them deans.) Matt Sands was then the vice chancellor.³⁰ Matt was not well-trusted by many of the scientists. He was deemed as having sold out to the colleges. He was one of the founding members of Kresge College. On the other hand, Matt was a really nice guy. I really liked Matt. I've always liked Matt. I always thought he was fair and reasonable. And frankly, never liked the way he was treated by the campus.

This is an aside, but Matt Sands was the co-author of the Feynman Lecture Series. So if you go buy the Feynman Lecture Series, they're actually by Feynman and Sands. Quite arguably, certainly during his time here, he was the most famous physicist on the campus. I think they brought him in as the vice chancellor of sciences, which he did for a few years. When he stepped down from that, he went back to the physics department for a few years and then retired. When he retired, they wouldn't give him an office. I always thought that was just appalling treatment for somebody who was quite arguably the most well-known physicist within the department. But people felt like he had sold out to this strange system.

I'm trying to begin to convey to you that the tension between the colleges and the boards was very real in those days. It was palpable, particularly in the sciences.

Reti: And that was one of the ways that you began to be aware of it, was through the treatment of Matt Sands.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

But anyway, Matt got in touch with me at one point and said he wanted me to come see him. So I went to see him. He said, "You ought to join a college." I kind of had expected that. I wasn't surprised. I was fine with that. He said, "I think you should join College Seven (later Oakes College)." He said he wanted to arrange a meeting with Herman Blake and Ralph Guzman, who were the two founder of College Seven.³¹ I said fine.

So I had a meeting with Herman and Ralph. It was a very good meeting. Herman, of course, was always very funny. He always dressed in a black leather jacket. He had a beard. He did not look the part of the college provost. Ralph Guzman looked much more the college provost type. We had a very good meeting about what the college was about. I was actually quite impressed with them, but I wasn't sure.

So I made an appointment to go see Bill Doyle because Bill had already decided to become a founding member of Oakes College.³² I went to see Bill to make sure that this made sense, that I wasn't getting sucked into something really unknown or crazy. Bill, as you probably know, is a very solid citizen, a very reasonable man, a very sensible guy. Talking to him for ten minutes made me realize that if this was good enough for him, it was good enough for me. So I signed on and that's how I became a founding member of Oakes College.

Reti: How did you feel about Oakes, the mission that Oakes had at the time?

Blumenthal: I liked it. This was something that I could relate to. I think somehow Matt knew that and somehow that's what caused him to put me together with Herman and Ralph. The mission really resonated with me and still does to this day. So I've definitely committed to it. We will revisit Oakes College. But I'm trying to set the stage for some of the things that happened early on.

The early years were interesting and somewhat chaotic. One of the first things I did after I got here was I was asked to write an annual review paper. In many fields, particularly in scientific fields, there are these annual reviews. So I was asked to write an annual review with Wally Tucker, my mentor from Boston, on compact x-ray sources. That took a lot of time after I arrived, a lot of time, but we worked on it; we got it done. I remember sending it to Bob Kraft, because I thought he might be interested in it. I was so pleased. He sent me back some comments, very nice comments about it. That made me feel really good.

Of course, I had to find a place to live, too. When I first arrived, I stayed with Bill Mathews and Cynthia Mathews at their house. Then I quickly rented an apartment on Button Street, a furnished apartment, which I was at for a few months. But it was very noisy there, so I moved to some apartments out on Merrill Street, which is in Live Oak. I lived there

for probably three, four years. I used to bicycle in a lot from Live Oak and that was kind of fun.

Ultimately, I moved to another apartment on Seabright Avenue when my wife and I, my then-girlfriend and I, decided to live together. She was not going to live in the Merrill Street apartments because there were cockroaches there. She made that very clear. (Reti laughs) So we moved to Seabright and lived in an apartment there and then a year later, we got married and bought a house in the west side of Santa Cruz on Escalona Drive. So that's where I lived in Santa Cruz.

It took me a while to become acclimated to the university culture of the boards and the colleges, the culture of the campus. Part of the difficulty for me was that I was in a board that had not acclimated well to the campus. One way to say it is the following: when astronomy moved down from the mountain, they had no idea what they were getting into as a campus. I mean, it was like strangers in a strange land to many of the people in astronomy.

Bob Kraft was so funny. One day took a few of us to lunch and he basically said, "You know, you guys have to understand these old folks from the mountain." Of course, he *was* one of the old folks from the mountain. But he said, "These are people who would observe all night, but they were expected to be in their office at eight o'clock the next morning, no matter what, even if they were up all night observing. For them to come to this campus, they're never going to acclimate to it." In fact, several of the astronomers left because they just couldn't understand, or take to what was going on at Santa Cruz.

Reti: And when you say what was going on at Santa Cruz, are you referring to college service?

Blumenthal: I was talking about the colleges, the culture. From their perspective, there was only one thing in the world—astronomy—and anything other than that is a waste of time. In fact, at one point, relatively early in my career, one of my senior colleagues—I can't remember, it may have been Kraft—said to me as I was joining Oakes College, “You know, you will be suspect for having joined Oakes College.”

I said, “What do you mean, I'll be suspect? I'm being told that I have to do this.”

He said, “I know that. But that doesn't mean that there won't be people suspicious of you for doing it.” (laughs) I said, “Okay—” That was the culture of the time.

I drove out here. When I got here, I went to see Bill, Bill Mathews. I remember sitting in his office, and we were just chatting. He said, “I only have one word of advice for you.”

I said, “What's that?”

He said, “Watch out for George Herbig.”³³

I said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “Just watch out for George Herbig.”

I didn't know who George Herbig was. George Herbig, of course, is a very, very famous astronomer who made some major discoveries. I didn't know that at the time. I didn't know who he was. But once Bill said that to me, I imagined this ogre. (laughter) So later, when I met Herbig, it was a shock, because Herbig had this very nice demeanor, very pleasant, very affable, very personable. Of course, he could also be tough as nails and really unfair at times, too, but his exterior was very, very pleasant.

But he used to drive Bill up the wall. In the early days, when we accepted students to graduate school, the whole department would vote on who to accept. We wouldn't just

leave it to a committee. Herbig objected at one point to a number of foreign graduate students that we were prepared to admit. Bill was furious. As he walked out, he had steam coming out of his ears and he said, "I wanted to say in the worst possible way, if you want to do Americans first, would that apply to your wives, too?" Because Herbig was married to a German woman.

Reti: Oh! (laughs)

Blumenthal: Anyway, there was that culture. There was also the culture with regard to job security and tenure. Astronomy became known on campus as the hardest, by far, department to get tenure in. If you did get tenure, it was often at the last possible moment. That's what happened with Joe Wampler. Wampler was a faculty member who had done an amazing thing. He was the guy who built the image dissector scanner for the 120-inch telescope on Mount Hamilton. He had taken this telescope, which was no longer one of the biggest in the world, and he had put on an electronic device that made it by far the most powerful telescope in the world, just because of the device he had built. And he did some really good science. But he was still an assistant professor and they didn't tenure him until the last possible moment. In today's world, he would have been tenured years and years earlier. In fact, right after he got tenure, I think he left to become the first director of the Anglo-Australia observatory in Australia for two years. He took a two-year position. He just got tenure, and that's how he was regarded internationally. He did come back to Santa Cruz for a while, and then later went to Europe, to the European Southern Observatory.

But it was known that tenure was difficult. In fact, we used to joke that in astronomy if you didn't get tenure, you were sure to get a full professorship somewhere else. And there were a few very famous astronomers, Peter Conti was one who (this was before my time),

didn't get tenure. Moved on. And another one, a really bright young astronomer, George Preston, left and went to Caltech. I've always liked George, but from what I understood, he just couldn't stand the culture at Santa Cruz. So it was an issue.

The tenure thing got particularly bad when Jeff Scargle came up for tenure. Scargle was one of the people who was hired a few years earlier than me.

Scargle was a bit of a defining moment for me, so I do want to talk about him a little bit.

So Jeff, nice guy. I think a good teacher. I always felt that he was a model of somebody who fit into the university here. He did all the right things. He joined Kresge College. He did some teaching there, TAed some sections there, did various things there. And in the astronomy part, he did some really innovative work on time series analysis, analyzing how certain astronomical sources vary with time, and what you could learn from it. He was a theorist, but he'd also done some observing, which I gather was his undoing because when he came up for tenure, I think people felt that his observing wasn't as good as it could have been, but he was fundamentally a theorist. From a purely scientific perspective, I believe that he was the most likely to succeed among the assistant professors. And he was just a good guy. He TAed a course for Gregory Bateson.

Gregory Bateson taught this course *Toward an Ecology of the Mind*. Bateson was this cult figure of the '60s and '70s. And at the end of that quarter, Jeff showed me his teaching evaluations and they were hilarious. Half of the class basically wrote an evaluation that said, "Scargle was terrible. All he ever did was question the ideas put forward in this class. He was so negative about everything. He did a terrible job as a teacher. I'm so sorry that I had him as a teaching assistant for this class." The other half of the class said, "But for Jeff, this course would have been intolerable. (Reti laughs) His healthy skepticism about the concepts of the class made it an intellectual experience—" (laughs)

So Jeff actually had fit in quite well at Kresge. But one day, Jeff came to my office. He was just down the hall from my office. He was holding back tears. He said he had heard that the department had met and voted not to grant him tenure. I was shocked. Then he asked me if I would go tell the other assistant professors. So that fell to me. I had to tell Doug Keeley; I had to tell Joe Miller; I had to tell Sandy Faber.

Reti: She was an assistant professor at that time.

Blumenthal: All of them. And Bill Burke. I think Dave Rank, too. I told all of them, kind of at his request. It was really hard, because everyone was really shocked, really, really quite shocked.

In fact, Sandy and I decided we would throw—when Scargle left, we threw him a going away party. I remember I called up Gary Lease from Kresge College to invite him, because I knew Gary knew Jeff quite well. Gary was just shocked that somebody from astronomy would call. I explained to him that we were not the bad guys. We were not the decision makers. We were the colleagues who were sorry to see him go. Gary was fine with that.

But it was really difficult to see Jeff go because I really believed that if anyone could get tenure, it would have been Jeff. Around that time, I remember I ran into Geoff Burbidge, whom I've mentioned before. I mentioned my disappointment that Scargle had not gotten tenure and Geoff said, "Well, I didn't think he did that great of work."

I said, "Well, wait a minute. He did this and he did that."

He said, "Oh. Maybe he did." He said, "Sometimes your colleagues know your work better than anyone else does, so maybe you're right, but I didn't think he did that much." (laughs) So it was clear that Geoff hadn't thought that highly of him. I don't know if Geoff was a letter writer, but it did say something.

So when Scargle didn't get tenure, I remember I went to Bill on one of our bike rides. Bill and I would take bicycle rides every Sunday. On one of our bike rides, I mentioned to Bill how disappointed all of us were. Bill was sort of disappointed and said, "You know, you should think about the fact that maybe it doesn't portend as negative as you think, that maybe there were some unique things about Jeff that caused him not to get tenure." I think Bill was sending me a message not to let this get me too down. But do you want to know the truth? I mean, throughout my assistant professorship, I had my Plan B because I was not at all confident that I would get tenure.

Reti: Well, there's kind of this story out there that I've heard from a number of faculty, that there were a lot of faculty at UCSC who didn't get tenure right about that time. Do you feel like that was the case?

Blumenthal: It is true. It is true, in part, because we had a young faculty. They were building the campus; they were building the departments or boards. They were building the colleges. They were spending a lot of time doing stuff that assistant professors shouldn't do. They weren't devoting that time to the research, so when the research was judged for tenure, it often came out not adequate. And so yeah, there were a lot of people in that role.

Later on, Doug Keeley also didn't get tenure. I think by today's standards and by most of the campus standards, both Scargle and Keeley, if you really apply true campus standards of the time, they would have gotten tenure.

But Scargle was replaced by Stan Woosley, who ended up being an really outstanding national scientist and a member of the National Academy. Doug Keeley was replaced by Doug Lin.³⁴ There's nobody like Doug Lin. And so, in some ways, they were step ups,

major step ups. But that doesn't mean that Scargle and Keeley weren't legitimate and good scientists.

Bill and I would take bicycle rides every Sunday. We would bike up in the mountains somewhere. Sometimes we'd bike up and back. Sometimes we'd bike up in the mountains and Cynthia would meet us and drive us back from wherever we ended up. We used to love to go up into Mountain Charlie Road, things like that. One time we even bicycled to Sausalito.

Reti: Wow, you must have been in good shape.

Blumenthal: I was, in those days. It was great fun. We did that for a number of years. It ended roughly the time I got married, because I felt more obligation to spend time with my wife and his kids were starting to grow up. So other things got in the way. But it was a great way to talk science. It was a great way to learn about the university. I learned a lot from Bill. Bill was another example of an ideal faculty member. I don't know if you know this about him, but he's a world-class musician. He started a group here in Santa Cruz, the Antiquarian Funks. He cut a number of records. He was regarded as one of the two or three best medieval coronet players in the world. He taught a course in the physics and psychophysics of music for what was then College Five and later became Porter College. So to me, he was kind of an ideal faculty member for Santa Cruz, also a great scientist.

So one question that you wrote on your outline was: what drew me here? What really attracted me to Santa Cruz, at the end of the day, was outstanding astronomy. This was clearly one of the best departments in the country or the world, so why would I not want to be associated with it? They had some really great people here.

Reti: Is that because of Lick Observatory?

Blumenthal: It was because of Lick. I should give you a little more history there. Two of the giants of the time of the transition were Albert Whitford and George Herbig. George Herbig was a major scientific figure, did all kinds of stuff on early stars, star formation, kind of made that field. He, I think justifiably, was regarded as one of the great astronomers of his time.

Albert Whitford had come to Lick from the University of Wisconsin a few years earlier, before the move to Santa Cruz. It happened because UC built this 120-inch telescope on Mount Hamilton. It's now called the Shane Telescope. Shane, who was the previous director, had gotten the money to build it. But when they opened it up, it didn't work. Imagine, you spend all this money to build this huge telescope, the second largest one in the world, and the damn thing doesn't work.

So they finally decided to hire Whitford from Wisconsin to come out. He was known as an instrumentalist. They made him director of the observatory, and his job was to make that telescope work, which he did. He fixed it. I don't even know what the problem was that he fixed, but whatever it was, he fixed it. He was then the director of Lick Observatory. And he was the director when they moved to Santa Cruz.

But there were many, in particular, George Herbig, who resented the fact that suddenly we were in this weird campus and the director was not protecting astronomy from the weirdness of the campus on which we found ourselves. (Reti laughs) So the two of them didn't get along very well. The story goes that ultimately Herbig basically arranged for people to tell Whitford that his time was up and he had to leave the directorship, which he did.

Whitford was a self-effacing man, very, very self-effacing, but very accomplished. I grew to like Whitford a lot and had many conversations with him. When he told me the story

of the early years at Santa Cruz, he never mentioned George Herbig. So I confronted him once and told him the story as I had heard it. He said, "I won't deny that that's true." (laughs) Anyway, that was the culture that we were in. It was kind of a tough culture.

We also saw it when we hired Stan Woosley. When Woosley was hired, we did this national search. Of course, in those days, all searches were both a college search and a board search. So the board came up with our list, and the college, Kresge, came up with their list. Their list, the number one person was our number two. People felt really strongly that Woosley was somebody who showed promise of real greatness, that he was heads and shoulders above anyone else in terms of his potential, which turned out to be true. Furthermore, Woosley wanted to live in the college. He actually wanted to live in the college and be a resident assistant and work with students and live with students. He was married. He didn't have any children. He and his wife wanted to do that.

So we were all puzzled that there was such opposition to hiring him on the part of Kresge. Finally, at a board meeting it was suggested that the faculty *en masse* should go over and meet with the folks at Kresge. Herbig was enthusiastic about this. I just had this image of somebody wanting to go out and see the enemy eye-to-eye. (laughter) So we all marched over to Kresge College. We had a meeting with May Diaz, who was then the provost of Kresge College,³⁵ and, I think, Dave Kliger, who was also in Kresge College at the time.³⁶ We had this long meeting where everybody argued their case, and there was no agreement reached. At the end of the meeting, May said, "You know, this has a simple solution. I will release the FTE." So she released the FTE and Stan was hired just as an astronomer, without any college affiliation. I don't know if he ever took a college affiliation. Anyway, that's how he got hired. He was a great hire. He was a superlatively outstanding scientist.

But that was the kind of stuff that happened in those days, these disagreements between boards and colleges, which could be about tenure, or it could be about hiring. This was exacerbated by kind of the lack of leadership. I'll come back to Dean McHenry and Dean's lack of leadership in the last year or two of his tenure as chancellor. In the earlier years, when there were disputes, he resolved them. But he didn't step in and resolve these disputes. They either resolved themselves, or didn't get resolved.

Reti: Why do you think that was?

Blumenthal: I don't know. It was his last year as chancellor, so maybe he didn't have a desire to step into these battles. I don't know. Maybe he didn't care. I simply don't know. But this wasn't the only case.

Reti: Very interesting.

Blumenthal: So, before I sidetracked myself, I was trying to talk about what attracted me to Santa Cruz. It was the outstanding astronomy. It was the new educational model. I really loved the idea that we were doing things differently here. Colleges seemed like a fantastic idea as a way of delivering innovative education. I love, and I still to this day love the narrative evaluation system. I thought it was a great system. I loved writing evaluations rather than giving grades. That all appealed to me in many ways. It was a beautiful location. Who could ask for anything more beautiful? Every weekend, we would bicycle up in the hills. I loved being at a place where there were seasons again. Remember, I grew up in Milwaukee, then spent four years in San Diego, where it's temperate summer all the time. I wanted to be in a place where there were seasons, although not as extreme as the Midwest.

The only thing that bothered me about Santa Cruz was that it was a small town. I'd never lived in a small town before, and I didn't frankly like living in a small town, especially as

an unmarried young adult. I arrived in '72, I got married in '77, met my wife in '75. Between '72 and '75, with one or two exceptions, I think virtually every person I dated was from San Francisco or someplace outside Santa Cruz. I made an effort to go to San Francisco to have a social life, rather than in Santa Cruz, which seemed to me rather hopeless at the time.

Some other first impressions. "Physics versus astronomy," I have written down here, which is an interesting topic. When I arrived, the person who was in charge of the offices, assigning space, apologized to me profusely, because they couldn't give me an office on the first floor of Nat Sci 2, and instead I was on the third floor of Nat Sci 2, where the physics department was. But I was delighted, because I was trained in physics, interacted with physics. I figured I'd always interact with the astronomers, and this would give me an opportunity to interact with physicists. In fact, three of us were up there—at first, Doug Keeley, Jeff Scargle, and me; later it was Doug Lin, Stan Woosley, and me. From my perspective, this was great. I loved being on the physics floor. It was sometimes a little disruptive. For example, when I first moved there, there wasn't an office next to me. There was a conference room. It was the conference room where physics held their board meetings. I still remember, one Saturday I came in to work in my office and they actually had a board meeting on that day. They were screaming at each other so loudly and so incessantly that I couldn't work, and I ultimately had to leave. (laughs) And that was, to some extent, what physics was like. Whereas astronomy—you know, we may have had our differences, but nobody ever yelled and screamed at each other. People tended to get along and be gentlemanly, or gentlewomanly toward each other. So I could definitely see the difference in culture, and whenever anyone mentioned the possibility of combining physics and astronomy, my reaction was, over my dead body. Because even though, in terms of the subject area, I would have preferred such an arrangement, I thought, why

would I give up a collegial astronomy department for a non-collegial physics department?

Reti: So that was actually something that was considered, was consolidating them?

Blumenthal: There had been at least some discussion at one point, but it never really went very far. I was adamantly opposed to the idea. I came to realize that, despite some of the petty things that I've said about some of the astronomers, this was a department that pretty much got along with each other quite well, and I think compared to other astronomy departments, especially so, around the country. I think that's something we can be proud of and I think it still is true today.

But being located in physics was good. It was good for me to interact with people. It helped get my collaboration with Joel Primack started.³⁷ It was also an education for me. At a certain point, they took that conference room next to me and converted it into offices. The person whose office was next to me was Mike Nauenberg.³⁸ I would say that not a day went by when Mike didn't storm into my office with his latest outrage about something. The funny thing about Mike is when Mike is wrong, he's very, very wrong. But truth is, probably at least in those days, he was probably right 80 percent of the time. I learned a lot, just from listening to his rants, so it wasn't that bad to be there. But again, he was wrong a lot, too.

Impressions of UC Santa Cruz in the 1970s

I also started going to senate meetings early on. That was also an interesting experience. So, not only did I go to senate meetings, I joined a senate committee relatively early on. With regard to senate meetings—I don't know how to convey how naïve I was—I mean, geez. So when I showed up, one of the things that one day appeared on my desk, as a new faculty member, was the manual of the Academic Senate. I didn't know from beans, so I

thought I had to read it. So I did! (Reti laughs) I'm sorry, I just didn't know any better. So I actually did read the manual. (laughs) Well, what did I know? I also started attending senate meetings, not always the whole meeting, because we often had astronomy colloquia that day, but I would at least stay through the chancellor's remarks. But often for the whole meeting, if I could.

Reti: Who was chancellor by then?

Blumenthal: McHenry was chancellor when I started attending meetings.³⁹ And, of course, when McHenry retired, there were all of these meetings about Mark Christensen.⁴⁰

Reti: You saw where I was going with that. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yes. Oh, yes. Those meetings definitely went on. It was fascinating to be at meetings of the senate. In those days, I would almost have characterized it as the clash of the British titans because it felt like there were all these British accents arguing with each other. John Faulkner, was the only other astronomer who would go. And then there was Jasper Rose.⁴¹ And there was Glenn Willson.⁴² There were lot of them and they'd usually be arguing with each other in British accents. It was fascinating to listen to, not that I necessarily understood the arguments. I think Joe Bunnett was maybe the first senate chair when I started. Joe was a very solid, down-to-earth guy, very sensible—he kept some order out of chaos.⁴³

Reti: Ken Thimann would have still been there at that time because he didn't retire till later.

Blumenthal: Ken Thimann was certainly still on the faculty. Again, a very solid guy.⁴⁴

But it was fun to sit and listen to the senate meetings. I didn't participate. I'm not even sure I even understood all the issues until the Christensen era came along, and then the big debate was how competent is our chancellor. I'm sure you've heard this before.

Reti: Do you want to say something about that era?

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: Because that would be really helpful, to hear your perspective.

Blumenthal: So when McHenry announced that he was stepping down, they did a search, of course, as they always do. I remember there was a regent who visited the campus. I think it was Elinor Heller, but I'm not sure.⁴⁵ It was a woman regent. She was very well meaning. I met her at Oakes College. I don't know why she was there, but she seemed very pleasant. She mentioned that the search was going on and she said, "I can't tell you who it is, but I can tell you we're getting this campus a really outstanding chancellor you can be proud of." I just remembered her enthusiasm.

Then it was announced that it was Mark Christensen from Berkeley. Christensen looked ideal for the part. He was young; he was very handsome. He was very Kennedy-esque. He seemed vigorous. This seemed like a match made in heaven. Then when he showed up, it all kind of went to hell. I remember he went around and visited the colleges, and he gave a talk at Oakes College, which did not go over well.

Reti: I'm sorry to press you, but when you say it didn't go over well, do you remember why?

Blumenthal: There was no meat on the bones. It was just sort of very vague. One had no sense of what he wanted to do, or where he was going.

Then I started hearing rumblings. Some of the rumblings had to do with issues like tenure. The feeling was that he was giving tenure too readily. I think John Faulkner was one of the people leading that, because John was the chair of CAP [Committee on Academic Personnel, which at that time was called the Budget Committee, as it still is at Berkeley.] at the time. I think Mike Nauenberg hated him, for whatever reasons. And I started hearing these stories that people were, at a certain point, just making fun of him and it kept getting worse and worse.

Then there was this issue about admissions. So, at the time, the applications to UC Santa Cruz which had been so robust during the sixties, you know, ten applicants for every opening, it suddenly turned around in the early seventies. Suddenly we weren't getting enough applications to fill out our entering classes. It was a big, big issue. There was even talk about the possibility of closing the Santa Cruz campus, which we can again come back to.

So clearly, admissions was going to be really important. Christensen did a search for a new admissions director. I was somewhat familiar with it, because the chair of the search committee was Bruce Rosenblum in physics, who I knew quite well.⁴⁶ Bruce told me that he thought there were some really good applicants; he was very, very happy. They submitted a list of names. Bruce said he sent ten names to the chancellor, ordered from best to worst, and that Christensen, chose number ten on the list, Roberto Rubalcava. Now, I never knew Rubalcava personally, but I did know that when Joe Wampler was on CAFA, the senate admissions committee, he used to have fights all the time with Rubalcava. Finally, Joe took to taking Rubalcava's letters and posting them on his bulletin board, because he thought they were so stupid. So I didn't know much about Rubalcava per se, but I know Joe didn't like him, and Bruce was nearly apoplectic when he was appointed the director of admissions.

So things did not get better with admissions. I think that was also one of the things that was held against Christensen, was the perception that he was not capable of even making good appointments.

Then there was this famous senate meeting where—I don't remember what the set up was—but Christensen spoke to the senate. It may have been a special meeting to talk about his chancellorship. I remember he got up and said that on the issue of departments versus boards, and the potential reaggregation of the campus, which had begun to be discussed, he was looking for leadership from the Academic Senate, and that he had held back from expressing his views because he thought that this should come from the faculty. I think he may have even said what his views were. But at that meeting, it just felt like it was way too little, too late. It almost seemed like an act of desperation, a man desperate to hang onto a job that he may not have been well qualified for. The rumor mill was, the joke was that there was a weekly jitney to Berkeley (University Hall) of faculty to lobby for his dismissal. I don't know if it was literally true, but I think figuratively, in some sense, it was true.

Eventually, he stepped down, to be replaced by Angus Taylor, who was first the acting chancellor, and just when he stepped down at the very end, they made him chancellor, just for the title.

Angus Taylor, one of the first things he did when he became chancellor was he fired Roberto Rubalcava, who during an occupation of the chancellor's office called Taylor an old fart or something, I think that's right. So Taylor took that opportunity to fire him. It was probably the best thing he could do for the campus. I have a lot of admiration for Angus Taylor.⁴⁷ He was only chancellor for a year, or a year and a half, but he turned a lot

of stuff around. At least from my distant vantage point—I didn't know him very well—I was very impressed with him.

Reti: Do you mind me asking, other than the enrollment and the admissions director, what other kinds of things did you see Angus Taylor turning around?

Blumenthal: He brought a sense of competency, of academic excellence. If you talked to Angus Taylor, you never questioned whether he was committed to excellence. That just came across. He gave mathematics colloquia. Everything he talked about was about the quality of the university, enhancing the quality of the university. You didn't get that from Christensen. Christensen talked about much more wishy-washy things, at least from where I was sitting, wishy-washy things, which I couldn't even understand. I didn't know where it was leading. With Taylor, it was really clear. He wanted excellence. He was going to do what he could to pursue excellence. Full stop. And he seemed to operate as a man of integrity, a man who practiced what he preached. That also came across. I had great admiration for him. He was here only a short time.

He's also, I might add, was the chancellor that granted me tenure, or recommended tenure, I should say.

Reti: (laughs) Sure.

Blumenthal: But I felt that way long before then.

Reti: Was there any chance that Chancellor Taylor would become permanent? I know you said that he got the title of chancellor. Was there any chance that he would stay and that they wouldn't do a new recruitment?

Blumenthal: I think the answer is no. The regents' rules are such that you can appoint an acting chancellor on a dime, but a permanent chancellor does require a recruitment.

Secondly, I think Taylor was clear that he didn't want to be the permanent chancellor. I think the fact that they changed his title to chancellor at the end was merely meant as an honorific, a well-deserved honorific, I might add. But it was an honorific.

I felt like this was a guy who was competent. He knew what he was doing. He understood the university. I think we would have been very lucky had he stayed. He was what we needed at the time. I think it was David Saxon, who was then the president, who appointed him. They must have been close in one way or another. I'm not sure whether Taylor was the provost under Saxon. I think he had been the provost. He was also the chair of the Academic Senate at one point in his life.

Reti: The systemwide Academic Senate.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So just again, as an aside, an interesting factoid is that there have only been four chairs of the Academic Senate who ever became a chancellor and three of them were at Santa Cruz: Karl Pister, Angus Taylor, and me.

Reti: That's important. It says something about this campus that's important to record.

Blumenthal: So, I just thought extremely highly of Angus Taylor.

So we were talking about the senate. (laughs) Somehow it was told to me that I should join a senate committee. So I did. I joined CAFA, Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid. I think I was on CAFA for a couple of years. I was an assistant professor. Nowadays, we don't do that. We don't appoint assistant professors to senate committees, except when the senate has kind of a special fellowship or scholarship that includes some course relief for a faculty member to join a senate committee as an assistant professor. But in those days, that didn't exist. It was just told to me this would be a good thing for me to do.

In fact, it was a good thing for me to do, because it gave me an opportunity to meet faculty who I would not otherwise have met around campus. That's how I met Henry Hilgard.⁴⁸ I met Michael Tanner, who was on the committee.⁴⁹ I met a few other people. It did expand my horizons a lot. I met, got to know Lee Duffus, who worked in admissions and the registrar's office for many years. He was later the head of the retiree association and a staunch UCSC supporter.

I met a bunch of people, and I think that was a good thing. When that was done, I was asked to serve on the Committee on Rules, Jurisdictions, and Elections, which was the kind of a thing that appealed to me, actually. Then I was asked to serve on the systemwide Committee on Rules, Jurisdictions and Elections. And it was kind of funny because the guy who chaired it the two years I was on that committee was really good. He was a guy from UCLA, in speech. He was sharp. He knew his stuff forwards and backwards. He was excellent. Whenever we had to meet to deal with an issue, he had it all worked out beforehand. It was so easy because he really had thought things through carefully.

Until, an issue arose from UCLA. A really nasty issue arose at UCLA. He called me up one day and said that there was this issue, and could I please take the lead on it, because he couldn't. He said he would send me all the papers. So he sent me all the papers. There was this big pile of stuff. You wouldn't believe how much stuff there was. It was a bunch of academics arguing about an interpretation of the academic personnel manual, and it all depended upon the definition of the word "is," and how inclusive "is" was. There were linguists who were writing about it. There were lawyers writing about it. You would not believe the stuff that they sent. My eyes turned purple reading through all this stuff. It was driving me crazy.

So I called up the other committee members and they said no, no, they wanted me to give them a recommendation. (laughter) So I went through it again. And finally—you know, you have these moments—I realized that this was all irrelevant. I realized that it doesn't matter how you define it, the whole APM was irrelevant. This had to do with voting rights, and the voting rights were not determined by the APM. It was determined by the senate bylaws; therefore, the senate bylaws are what counts. And therefore, I could just completely ignore the APM. So I wrote an opinion. The other members of the committee were happy to sign off on it and we got this done. But it was so scary to get that and not have a clue how to go down that route. I was so confused for a while. (Reti laughs)

Anyway, again, that was a fun experience, and it set me up for my later career in the senate as well. (chuckles)

Reti: I'm sure.

Blumenthal: But anyway, I was glad I did the senate meetings and the senate committees.

One other comment about those early days was that graduate students were largely an afterthought on campus. It's true that there were probably always 10 percent graduate students at Santa Cruz. But the graduate students, certainly in the early days, felt that they were the lowest rung on the totem pole. They felt they were an afterthought. Nobody ever talked about them. In conversations, people talked about students, but they really meant undergraduate students. So the graduate students really felt somewhat disaffected, which was unfortunate, because at least in my field, one of the important issues is to make sure that students get out in a timely way and that they're supported during their graduate careers. I'm very proud that my department has managed always to provide support for our graduate students. I know that many departments can't do that.

But the students really felt underappreciated. If you talk to graduate students today, many of them will say the same thing, but I think it's taken on a different role because of the increasing importance of the graduate division. In those days, there was no unique graduate division. There was a dean of research and graduate education who did both, and I suspect spent a whole lot more time on research than on graduate education. I just wanted to make that comment, because that was something I heard all the time from graduate students.

Reti: Well, that's something that's come up in the oral histories over the years, that the original plan was to focus on undergraduate education first and then oh, yeah, eventually we'll have grad students. Then Kenneth Thimann came here and said, "This is completely unsustainable from a scientist's point of view. We have to have graduate students." But there was always that tension, from pretty much day one, about the place of graduate students at UCSC.

Blumenthal: It's true. But I never sensed that there was official disregard of graduate students. I wasn't here when Ken Thimann did his thing, but it doesn't surprise me. That was who he was. He tended to be the voice of reason in matters like that.

Reti: Yes. So you were still feeling that by the time you came in the seventies, that was still an issue.

Blumenthal: I felt it particularly because I was so close to the graduate students. I socialized with them.

Then you had a question in here which I thought I would address, which was comparing educational experience at Wisconsin, San Diego, and Santa Cruz. I think there's some interesting things here. One is quarters versus semesters. I was a student under semesters at Wisconsin, quarters at San Diego. Here, of course, were quarters. As a student, I much

preferred quarters. I recognize that if you did a poll it would be 50/50, and everybody feels really strongly about it. But I actually thought, from a teaching perspective, teaching under quarters was so much better because it gave you distinct, well-defined chunks that had limited duration and you could then, the next quarter, move on to something else. Again, many would disagree with me. I think the trend these days is nationally toward semesters. So I fearlessly predict we will someday be on semesters.

Another thing has to do with informality. I alluded to this before when I talked about the informality at San Diego, how people dressed. But you saw it even more at Santa Cruz. Throughout most of my career at Santa Cruz, I wore shorts every day.

So the next thing on your list was recollections of Dean McHenry. I only knew McHenry near the end of his career. McHenry had a general practice that he always interviewed faculty when he did their job interviews. He didn't interview me, however.

Reti: I was wondering.

Blumenthal: I knew none of that. But right after I arrived, within a week or two of my arrival, I got a note saying that the chancellor wants to see you in his office at three o'clock on Tuesday. All I could think of was, oh, shit, what have I done?!

So I dutifully appeared at his office, really nervous about what this was going to be. But in fact, this was his attempt to do the interview after the fact. He wanted to have a very pleasant conversation. That's what we had. We talked about what I did, and we talked a little bit about the university, and my hopes for the university. It was all very pleasant. I remember him asking me how old I was, because his son, I think, had just gotten an academic position, and he was rather disturbed to discover that I was younger than his son was. But other than that, it was a very pleasant conversation with no particular outcome. It was a good conversation.

I think I mentioned to you that by the time I arrived, it was clear that there was a transition going on. It used to be that whenever there were disputes, like colleges versus boards, McHenry would simply resolve them. He would step in and he would serve as the referee. But that was happening less and less during the time I overlapped with him. I think he retired at the end of the '73-'74 academic year. So I overlapped with him for two years. I really never knew exactly how he stood on the colleges versus the boards hierarchy of issues. People used to talk in those days—it may have come from him—of “creative tension.” I used to hate that term. I thought that was a terrible term, “creative tension.” But that’s how people described the tension: the colleges versus boards.

Bruce Rosenblum told me an interesting story, which kind of summed it all up. Bruce was a physics professor. At a certain point, he was the chair of physics, and the provost of Stevenson, and the chair of the council of provosts. So he served in multiple capacities. Physics moved into Nat Sci 2 because they decided they had to have labs for the scientists. They couldn’t put them all in the colleges. So physics was on the third floor and chemistry was on the fourth floor. There was a steno pool up on the fourth floor where the mail was delivered. Bruce felt like his department should really have their own mailboxes on the third floor, so he bought a bunch of little slots of some sort and (Reti laughs) set them up in the physics office on the third floor. The board secretary (today we would call it department manager), would go up to the fourth floor, collect all the mail for physics, come down and distribute it to these mail slots on the third floor.

One day he got a call from the person who was the head of all support staff units on campus. She told him that it was unacceptable for the department manager to redistribute the mail, that the mail had to stay up in the steno pool, and it was not a part of her job to redistribute the mail.

He thought that was ridiculous. So he called the executive vice chancellor—in those days called the academic vice chancellor (AVC)—another title change around the time of Michael Tanner. Anyway, so he talked to the AVC. And according to him, the AVC said, “No, no, no. We don’t want mail distributed more easily in these buildings. We think that faculty should be associated with the colleges. They should get their mail in their colleges.” He didn’t want to do anything that would facilitate them thinking of their laboratories as being their homes.

Reti: Right. Because at least they’d have to go to the college to get their mail, if nothing else.

Blumenthal: That’s right. So he said no, he would not authorize having the department managers get the mail. Bruce was really pissed off, so he decided *he* would distribute the mail. (Reti laughs) So every day, Bruce would go up to the fourth floor, get the mail and distribute it in the mailboxes on the third floor.

He said he did this for a few weeks, until one day in his role as chair of the council of provosts, he was in a meeting at the chancellor’s office with McHenry and the AVC. When it got to be three o’clock, he looked at his watch and said, “Whoops, I’m sorry. I’ve got to go get the mail.” (Reti laughs)

McHenry said, “What do you mean?”

Reti: Uh-oh.

Blumenthal: He pointed at the academic vice chancellor and said, “He’ll explain.”

Reti: He ran out of the room. (laughs)

Blumenthal: He said by the time he got back to his office there was already a phone call saying it was okay to have the secretary distribute the mail.

Reti: That's a great story. (laughs) That's interesting, though. It illustrates McHenry's pragmatic—he was a complex figure.

Blumenthal: He was definitely a complex figure. McHenry was very supportive of Oakes College. I think Herman made him ultimately an honorary fellow of Oakes College, or maybe a real fellow. I don't know. But he was very, very supportive of Herman and of the beginnings of Oakes College. I think Herman always really appreciated that.

One of the jokes about McHenry at the time—I heard many faculty talk about his smiles—that he had a different smile that he would put on like some men put on suits. He'd put on a smile for the occasion. People said he had thirty-seven different smiles and if you could learn to interpret them, you would really be in good shape.

Reti: I haven't heard that before. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But he stayed involved even after he retired. I was in a number of events where he was there. I really appreciated his continued involvement with the campus and continued commitment to the campus. Certainly, his legacy is phenomenal. This campus wouldn't be anything like what it is without McHenry. It's kind of ironic. As I understand it, this wasn't his first choice. He really wanted to be chancellor of Irvine.

Reti: Really? Huh.

Blumenthal: You didn't know that.

Blumenthal: Where did I hear that? I read it more recently somewhere. I don't know where I read it. I'm sorry. It was in somebody's history of the times. He lobbied for Irvine,

didn't get it, and so they gave him Santa Cruz. But, of course, he made it his own. To me, that's not a negative at all. He made something out of it. He made this campus into something unique and special. I think he deserves real credit for that. And look at the people that he brought here.

My one complaint about McHenry was that he created a model that was, I think, not sustainable: the tension between the colleges and the boards. And for a state-supported university—it's a great model for Cambridge, but it isn't necessarily a model that would work in exactly the same way here. So I think it was difficult for us to acclimate to the changes that we needed to make in order to preserve the best of what his legacy is, while making it realistic.

Reti: Thank you. I'll stop for today.

Blumenthal: Thank you.

Joining Oakes College

Reti: All right. So today is October 16, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I am here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our sixth session of doing our oral history together, after a brief pause over the last month while we were starting the quarter and the chancellor was traveling and various things were going on. So now we're continuing.

Blumenthal: I thought today we would start to talk about Oakes College.

Reti: Great.

Blumenthal: I think that for me, being at Oakes College in the beginning was mostly about meeting the people and getting to know the people over there. I felt really committed to the theme of Oakes College. The theme was diverse experience at the

university, plus a commitment to rigorous science education for our students. That addition was really what I thought really made a difference and made Oakes College stand out. I know that Herman [Blake] was very, very committed to that idea.

Reti: Now, how did those two things go together?

Blumenthal: Herman actually studied science when he was in New York. He went on to a PhD in sociology, but I think he did have some background in science. Secondly, he did not want to preclude members of otherwise excluded communities from being able to pursue a scientific or engineering career. He felt really strongly about that. He felt that there was nothing inconsistent about a science or engineering career and being sensitized to the issues of difference in society. He certainly wasn't against people doing social sciences, or the arts, or other things. But he felt that that was a viable option for students. And he really wanted to emphasize it, and emphasize the *rigor* of it.

One of the things I learned quickly about Herman was that he was no soft touch. Herman had high expectations of students. He was no pushover. And if students didn't meet his expectations, he let them know about it. He had no compunctions about that. That actually surprised me, because I just assumed, naively, that if someone was steeped in the social sciences and really wanted to create this new set of opportunities for students they would really be much more tolerant of failure or bad behavior. Herman wasn't. Herman felt that (and I learned so much from him in this regard), that it's just as fair to have high expectations of students from different backgrounds as it is to have high expectations of students from wealthier, or more white, or more traditional backgrounds. I think that that was an important part of the life he lived and who he was. I think it was really important for our students. That's an important point and I think it sometimes gets lost in the discussion.

The Early Years of Oakes College

What else do I want to say about that? Well, I think I've mentioned before that by the time Oakes actually started, Herman was clearly going to be *the* provost, and it wasn't going to be done jointly with Ralph [Guzman]. I know that there were some issues there, but I have no idea what those issues were. No one ever told me, but I gathered that there were some issues.

Ralph was not even particularly present as a supporter of Oakes College once the college opened. On the other hand, within a couple of years, when Herman talked about the beginnings of the college, he fully acknowledged Ralph and Ralph's role. So I never quite figured out what was going on there. Some people know, but not me.

Anyway, the college started. There were some meetings of the college fellows, of which there were a few when the college opened. We would meet in random places on campus. But when the college actually opened for business, it was at Porter College. The college offices were at Porter College. The students were housed at Porter College. Classes were taught at Porter College. That was true for the first few years until Oakes itself was built. I don't remember how many years that was. It wasn't too many years. It wasn't that long a time. I think the college was built—almost immediately upon its being open, they started to build it and design it. I was not a part of the design team. There were other faculty who did that. But I was involved in what happened after the gift came in for Oakes, and how the gift was used, not just for a science center, but for the Oakes Provost House, which is now called Herman Blake House, by the way.

The original faculty were a very, very mixed group, and a very interesting group of people. Bill Doyle was, of course, there. I've already spoken about Bill. Bill was the rock of Gibraltar. He was a senior faculty member, a well-respected person on campus. He tended

to keep things on an even course, sometimes when they were threatening to go a little bit off course. It's notable Bill was one of the few senior people at Oakes College. There may be one or two others. Diane Lewis, I guess, was another, I think she was also fairly senior at that point.⁵⁰ She was in anthropology. Diane was another tenured senior person. Diane was important to the college, but she wasn't a force of nature the way Bill was.

So the overwhelming majority of the work was done by junior faculty, which was, of course, challenging in its own right, because the junior faculty also had serious responsibilities in their departments; they had to do research; they had to get tenure.

I thought I would mention a few of the people from the early days of Oakes College. I'm sure I'm missing some. Let's start with Jim Gill. Jim was in earth sciences.⁵¹ Jim: a solid guy. Very committed. He, almost from the beginning, was teaching earth science courses. At one point I co-taught a course with him. Jim was really committed and he was just an overall good citizen in those early days of the college.

Then, of course, there was Don Rothman. I can't remember whether Don was there from the beginning, whether he came the next year.⁵² But he was there very early on. Don was committed from day one. I almost can't say enough about Don. He was committed to the mission. He was committed to writing. He was committed to the importance of writing as a way of organizing one's thoughts, and writing as a way of succeeding in college. And he worked so well with students. He worked with many students in those early days of Oakes College.

I'm not sure exactly which courses he taught. He taught courses for the writing program. He also taught writing courses within Oakes College. I'm not sure exactly how that was divided. But Don was one of the most interesting faculty members in the college, without a doubt. He thought about issues of pedagogy. He thought about how pedagogical issues

could be transformative in people's lives. He thought about how learning to write was a way to learn how to think. To me, he epitomized what was so right about the place. I don't know if you knew Don.

Reti: I did.

Blumenthal: Just a fundamentally decent guy.

Reti: Yes. What a gem of a human being.

Blumenthal: Don went on years later to lead the California Writing Project. He did service statewide and pursued teaching students from all backgrounds how to write and think, how to organize themselves in terms of making written presentations. So he really carried that much, much further, and remained interesting till his death. He ultimately retired, but even then, he didn't stop teaching. He taught students in poor neighborhoods in Santa Cruz. He still did things on campus. I even remember him having a program with Herman Blake years later on. It was called "Listening Eloquently."⁵³ Don was very, very special.

Reti: Did you send your students to Don?

Blumenthal: I did. I did. He's one of the few people I would send my students to because he was value-added. I also loved talking to Don because when issues would come up, he'd always have an opinion. He'd always have thought about things rather deeply, frankly, much more deeply than I. So I learned a lot from him. He was very special. If goodness can be a measure of success, he was really a key player in the success of Oakes College. In fact, for me, he would be, leaving aside Herman, he would be *the* key player.

Reti: Kind of the soul of Oakes.

Blumenthal: He was kind of the soul of the college, from my perspective.

Reti: Yeah, that was my impression, too.

Blumenthal: Not everyone would agree with me about that. Some people, I'll mention a name in a few minutes, some people would argue was the soul. But to me, it was Don. It makes me feel nostalgic, just hearing all of this.

One of the things Herman did when he started the college, that I was so impressed with, and at first maybe puzzled by, was his emphasis on counseling. So he hired two counselors. One actually still lives in town, Ray Charland.⁵⁴ And the other was a woman from Oakland named Josie King. We treated them like any other fellow. They weren't faculty, but they were counselors. They dealt with students and their problems and their issues. I have no idea how Josie and Ray divided up their workload. I think actually Josie was in charge and Ray worked for her, is my vague recollection. I really appreciated their presence. They brought insights to discussions that I think were just invaluable for faculty to be hearing about the student experience in those days. I grew to like both of them a lot, a whole lot.

I know that Josie retired after a few years and a few years later, she passed away. I was really sad when that happened, because she was a very, very special person. And how Herman found her—Herman, I'm sure, could tell you far more than I could about that background. But it was a very, very, very, very special place.

We were talking about the senior people. One of the people who I think was fairly senior was Eduardo Carrillo.⁵⁵ He was an artist. Eduardo, I think was already a senior faculty member when he came to Oakes College. He may have been a full professor. He wasn't one of the young people.

Reti: No. He was older, for sure.

Blumenthal: I gravitated a lot to Eduardo. There was something about him that I just really liked. And in fact, one time we started to organize some evening discussion sessions among the faculty of the college. I think the first one, or maybe it was the second one, we had a program which was Eduardo and me. I talked about thinking about the universe, and Eduardo talked about his art. I remember I found it really interesting hearing about how he perceived beauty, and how he tried to capture beauty in his pictures. One of the things he did was he created these mosaics around campus from students in his class. So he had a lot to do with the appearance of the campus in those days.

Reti: Isn't there a mural at Oakes that he did?

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: I think that's still there.

Blumenthal: I think it is, too.

Reti: And people don't always know the history.

Blumenthal: No.

Reti: So this is great for people to hear about who he was.

Blumenthal: But he did that. Those were his classes that put those together. Eduardo was an interesting guy. I once heard Herman say—he said it jokingly—but he was sending a message. He once said that the reason he started Oakes College was so that he would have an excuse to hire Eduardo Carrillo. (laughter) I think that says something about Eduardo and who Eduardo was even before Oakes College came along. Eduardo died young, some years ago. I believe his widow still lives in Santa Cruz. But he was a very

special person. He was not, however, someone who was in the rough and tumble of the discussions about the formation of the college. He wasn't one of the most engaged in that discussion. He was more easygoing, willing to go along with whatever directions things were taking, as long as everyone left him alone. (laughter) Which I totally understand. So even though he was one of the more senior people, he wasn't one of the leaders, at least from where I stood.

Reti: And this discussion that you were having—was that with students being invited to listen?

Blumenthal: I think it was primarily the fellows of the college.

Reti: Amongst each other.

Blumenthal: Amongst each other.

Reti: Wow. That's really neat.

Blumenthal: It was so much fun. I think we only did a couple of them, and then it kind of petered out. I don't think it was a conscious decision to stop. It just didn't get organized. But I still remember that evening so well. I even remember some of the things that he said at that talk. He talked about beauty. He talked about loving to paint women. He talked about what art meant to him and his cultural background. He was really profound in the way he presented things.

Reti: And was there an interplay in terms of your talk about the universe and his art?

Blumenthal: Not really. It was two separate talks. We were each invited to do half the evening, and so we did. We really didn't make an effort. Although, knowing me, I'm pretty sure I made comments about how certain physical theories are so intrinsically beautiful,

in some sense, that they almost constitute art, which is something I do believe. I'm sure I said that. But on the other hand, those are words. Unless you understand the theory, you can't really understand why I would be crazy enough to call it beautiful, or artistic, or something like that. You'd have to really understand it to see why somebody would say that. And that beauty, just to be clear, comes from simplicity. I'll give you an example. The Higgs boson, you know, the so-called God particle. Well, that was discovered a few years ago, and led to a Nobel Prize, etcetera. But it was predicted back in the early '70s, or late '60s, or somewhere in that range, by Mr. Higgs. The Higgs mechanism solved two huge, huge problems in physics that no one had figured out how to solve. It solved them very elegantly, so that if I were to go through the mathematics of it, it would be like a page and a half. It just wasn't that complicated. It was elegant and it solved two problems that seemed unsolvable.

When I first learned the Higgs mechanism, there was absolutely no evidence for it, but it was one of those things. When I looked at it, I said, this has got to be right. It would be perverse if it wasn't.

Reti: Yeah. I see.

Blumenthal: So in that sense, it was beautiful. It wasn't as though there was beauty in the usual sense of the word. It's just that it was so elegant and so few words or equations did so much. That's really what I was trying to convey.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: Sure. So anyway, that was Eduardo.

Let's move on. Oh, now we come to the guy who many, maybe even Herman, regarded as the heart and soul of the college. Certainly one of the most interesting people I've ever met in my life was Roberto Crespi.⁵⁶

Reti: Ah, yes.

Blumenthal: Did you know him?

Reti: No. But we have an oral history with him that's quite brief. It was part of the oral history series on Oakes College.

Blumenthal: Ah, interesting. Oh, I should listen to that.

Reti: It was done in the early '80s.

Blumenthal: Roberto was an extremely interesting guy. He was in literature. He was very student-centric. So if you've ever heard of a faculty member being student-centric, Roberto was the ultimate of that. That was his motivation. He thought, lived, breathed and everything, students.

Roberto was committed to the concept of Oakes College, but probably committed in a slightly different way than the rest of us. I mean, for him it was almost ideological. Ideology crept a lot into his discussions and perceptions. Actually, Roberto and I disagreed a lot, but not in a mean and nasty way. I enjoyed my interactions with him, although I sometimes walked away from them completely puzzled, because I sometimes felt like I didn't get it. I'm not sure he walked away puzzled, I don't know. But sometimes I did.

He would usually take the more radical approach to issues. Sometimes that was fine, and sometimes I agreed with that. And sometimes I didn't. So it led to interesting discussions.

It led to interesting faculty meetings. Roberto was usually the one that was out there. And because he was out there and because he was so student-centric, that's why some people would have called him the heart and soul of the college. I think he cared more than anyone else. I think he was committed more than anyone else. I think he worked for students more than anyone else. He didn't just talk the talk; he walked the walk. I give him a lot of credit for that.

The issue for Roberto and his career was that he, I gather, didn't publish much, if anything, so he wasn't going to get tenure. I think ultimately what happened with Roberto is that, although I think he wanted to get tenure, the university wasn't willing to give it to him. What they ultimately did is they converted him into a lecturer with security of employment, so he got tenure in that regard, but it was a lecturer [Security of Employment] position, rather than a professor position. I think that stuck in his craw to some extent, although he accepted it. Honestly, I didn't know enough about his work to have a judgment one way or another. I have no doubt that he was a superlative, off the charts, good teacher.

He was Hispanic and he certainly identified a lot with the Hispanic community. I remember one summer he decided that he was going to learn Arabic, so he spent a summer learning Arabic and became fairly good at it. I remember talking to him about it. What I remember from the conversation, which I found amusing at the time but I now find completely understandable, he said there were twenty-five different words for camel. You think about it, it makes sense, but I would never have thought about it otherwise.

Reti: By the time that oral history was done, which was in the early 1980s, he was quite disappointed with Oakes. He felt that it had become assimilationist, essentially.

Blumenthal: Yes. Oh, there's no question he got disappointed. He got dissatisfied with it. I don't even know if he stayed in the college or not. I don't remember. But his disappointment was clear. He always wanted the more radical path. He wanted the more out-there path. And he felt that at a certain point, Oakes College was selling out. That happened even before Herman left. So I think at the end, Herman and he had some, I don't want to say falling out, because that implies it was personal. I doubt if it was. But they had some ideological differences. I don't think that kept Herman—I mean, I think Herman is one of those who would say Roberto was the heart and soul of the college in the early days. But I'm not sure he would say that was true ten years later. But anyway, I think Roberto was in many ways one of the most interesting people in the college, by far. He was certainly a contributor. If there was work to be done, he was there to do it. I give him a lot of credit for that. He paid a personal price for that. He did die very young. I think he was diabetic and I think something happened. I mean, people with diabetes sometimes die suddenly and young. He adopted a son, and his son was relatively young when he died, which was really tragic.

Reti: Very sad.

Blumenthal: Socially, I really didn't hang out at all with Roberto. If you asked me today, was he gay or straight, I couldn't have told you. I had no idea. But in those days it wouldn't have been quite as socially acceptable to come out.

Reti: No. (laughs)

Blumenthal: On the other hand, I can't imagine Roberto letting that stop him if he wanted—but I really don't know. I have no idea whether, what his—I have no idea.

Reti: Was Nancy Shaw there at the same time as you?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Yeah. Nancy Shaw was there at the same time. Nancy came a few years later, I would guess around '75, but that's a guess. She participated in the meetings. She was fairly active. But of course, that's when her famous tenure case happened.

Nancy was in community studies. She came up for tenure and she was denied tenure by Chancellor Sinsheimer.⁵⁷ But it soon came out that this denial of tenure happened after unanimous recommendations from both her department and her dean, as well as from two separate ad hoc committees. They all recommended tenure and Sinsheimer decided no.⁵⁸ I think he said what she did was kind of like a journalist.

So she filed an appeal with the Committee on Privilege and Tenure of the senate. The Committee on Privilege and Tenure found in her favor. Privilege and Tenure cannot look at substantive issues, like should she have gotten tenure. What they can look at whether or not there were procedural errors in the processing of her case, which they found there were. Their report goes to the chancellor, but the chancellor, since he was the one being complained about, kicked it up to the president of the university for a decision. The president was David Saxon and Saxon rejected the appeal, after which, Nancy hired an attorney and pursued a court case challenging the denial of tenure. At that point in history, never in the history of the University of California had a case of tenure denial ever been overturned.

Nancy's case ultimately settled with an agreement that there would be a de novo tenure review with three people making the decision: one appointed by the chancellor; one appointed by her department; and I can't remember where the third one was supposed to come from. They formed this troika to reevaluate. That was part of the settlement of her court case. Ultimately that troika decided to grant her tenure, and that's how she got tenure.

Reti: Wow. I never knew that part of it. I'm curious, as a member of Oakes College, if you remember how Oakes was viewing this case?

Blumenthal: This was really tough and it was really awkward. Oakes College strongly supported her tenure. I think I didn't say that earlier. Oakes strongly supported her tenure. There were questions that were raised. Nancy even asked what more could Oakes do, given that she was facing a tentative denial of her tenure from the chancellor. And at the end of the day, there was almost nothing that Oakes could do. Now that I understand the process better from my perspective today, that's true. Ultimately, the decision of tenure and non-tenure is a decision to be made by the chancellor. It's as simple as that.

What made her case unusual was that Sinsheimer applied his own judgment to her file. I will just tell you now as chancellor—I've now been doing this chancellor thing for twelve years—and I've done, I don't know, I'm guessing, a hundred tenure cases. I don't know. I'm making a pure guess. When I do a tenure case, the file comes to me with a gazillion recommendations, outside letters, lots of evidence. I wouldn't have enough hours in the day to go and make an independent judgment, nor should I, because I don't know these fields. I can't very well judge a field that's far removed from mine. In the years that I have done tenure cases, I can only think of two instances in which I used my own judgement. One was a case in physics, and one was a case in astronomy.

In the astronomy case, I did something I have never done before, which was not only did I grant tenure, but I granted a promotion to a higher level than any of the committees had recommended, because I believed that person deserved it, which I think history has borne out. So chancellors really only can work realistically, in my view, with the recommendations that they get from others. Sinsheimer, for whatever reason, decided not to do that, and that led him to that decision.

The procedural errors that Privilege and Tenure had identified were threefold. I remember this case very well. One was that he had had two ad hoc committees, rather than one, presumably because he didn't like the results of the first one. To be honest with you, I'm not sure that's a procedural error. I mean, if he was disinclined to give tenure and wanted more information, it doesn't strike me as a bad thing to get more information.

The second one was that he had written some letters to a third party about her case. It astonishes me that he would do that. That just seems so silly to do. It's not that he said anything bad, particularly, but he was accused of it. It was a bad idea to do that.

The third complaint, though, was completely legitimate, and that is he used information from her earlier review as a part of the decision making in this review. She had not been apprised of that. She didn't have an opportunity to rebut it. That *was* a legitimate complaint about the procedure and I think it was a fatal complaint about the procedure. I think she actually was right in the end. Even if I didn't agree with all three reasons, I certainly agreed with one.

And as I say, ultimately she was granted tenure. I'll come back to this in a later session, but later on, when my wife had some issues at Hastings, I contacted Nancy and asked her for her attorney. And we hired her attorney. That's a story yet to be told.

So that was Nancy.

Reti: How about Dave Klinger? Were you there with him?

Blumenthal: Dave came a lot later to Oakes College. I can't remember exactly when, and I certainly overlapped with him.

Reti: He was at Kresge first.

Blumenthal: He was at Kresge. I remember interacting with him at Kresge when he was at Kresge. He joined later and he was active later. But his activity was ramping up around the time that mine was ramping down. So I didn't interact with him much in that context.

Let's see. Who else do we have? Diane Lewis, I already mentioned. Diane was senior. Diane was kind of cool because she was a single mother. Diane was one of these super nice people. If I ever heard a nasty word out of Diane's mouth, I would have fainted, just from sheer shock. That's just not who she was. I think she epitomized some of the good things that we were doing in Oakes College. And in fact, when I was later on the executive committee of the college, the executive committee met at her house. Because she was a single mom and we met in the evening, and it was a whole lot easier for her if she didn't have to get a babysitter.

And then there's Jan Willis.⁵⁹ She was in religious studies, which was then a board. But she had been an undergraduate in physics when she went to Cornell. I had a number of discussions with her. She was African American, and very smart. Very, very, very smart. And very nice. So we decided we would teach a course together. We were going to teach a course called *Inner Space, Outer Space*. Seriously.

Reti: That's very '70s.

Blumenthal: Very '70s. And that's what we decided to do. We never did it, because she ultimately got recruited away by one of the small, elite private colleges on the East Coast. She was an assistant professor, African American. That was very unusual at the time, still is. Many, many years later, so just a few years ago, somewhere, somehow, I ran across an article about her in some magazine. It talked about the books she had written. She'd apparently had a very nice career. She was now one of the older senior faculty at this small college. I think she hadn't moved. I even thought about writing to her, but I don't think I

did, just to remind her of those old days. I really liked her. I thought she was a great colleague. She was interesting. I was kind of surprised that I could feel friendship toward somebody in religious studies. I mean, it isn't something I would have guessed, particularly in those days. But I really liked her and I found her intellectually interesting. And I'm still, to this day, disappointed we didn't teach our course together, which we would have, had she not decided to leave.

Reti: That would have been a neat course.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I think Herman tried to keep her. But you know, an elite college in the East. They can make it worth your while.

Another person I wanted to mention was Ron Saufley.⁶⁰ I don't know how much you know about Ron. He was the guy who wrote the grant proposal for the NSF grant that hired me. Bob Kraft had hired him to write this proposal. So in a way, he had a role in bringing me to Santa Cruz. But Ron joined the college as kind of the chief of staff to Herman Blake. Ron looks like a white middle-class lawyer, and he actually had gone to law school in his past. That was his demeanor, but he was anything but that. But he looked very straight. In many ways, he is straight. I don't mean gay/straight. I've liked Ron from day one. To this day, Ron and I are friendly. I see him periodically. He still comes back to campus occasionally. But Ron and Herman were a team, and Ron was kind of his chief of staff and his chief fundraiser. I think Herman, in the first days of the college, had another guy who was the chief of staff. He was a young guy, and he left to go to Australia to do something. His name was Bob Bosler. I don't remember him that well. But this Bob something always seemed a little out of place to me at Oakes. He seemed very straight, very traditional.

Then Ron came in. Ron, I think, overlapped with this other guy, because Ron was originally hired just to be the fundraiser. Then I think he took on more roles within the

college and stayed as long as Herman did. They were a great team. They got a lot done together.

Herman was great at fundraising. He would go to foundations. He was already well known. Herman had made the list, I forget which magazine, *Forbes* or one of the national magazines, had a list of the twenty most influential educators under the age of thirty-five. And Herman made that list, so he was getting a national reputation really quite early.

So I just love this story—they would go to some big foundation—I don't remember which one. Herman had an appointment and they showed up. There was Herman with his long beard and his black leather jacket. And there was Ron dressed in a suit. They'd go in to see the president of the foundation. The president would get up from behind his desk, put a big smile on, and say, "Dr. Blake, I am so happy to meet you," and walk over to Ron Saufley and shake his hand. (laughter)

Reti: Ouch.

Blumenthal: When you think about it, this is a great strategy. What a great one-up strategy. Because once—

Reti: God! (laughs) Interesting.

Blumenthal: Of course, Herman raised a lot of money. He raised money from a variety of sources, and ultimately raised money from the Oakes Foundation, through the San Francisco Foundation, to build the science center, to build the provost house, and to endow the college. As I understand it, Herman actually had a gift even before the Oakes Foundation was around. He had a gift to fully endow the college, and at the end of the day, he decided not to take the gift because he felt that this would attach to Oakes College a name that he was uncomfortable having attached to it. He wouldn't tell us what it was,

which is fine. That's up to him. Although I have to tell you, years later, in fact, maybe the last time he was on campus, I was reminiscing with him. I reminded him of that story and I told him, "You wouldn't tell us who it was." His response was, "And I'm still not going to tell you." (laughs) I think that says something about Herman as well.

Reti: Integrity.

Blumenthal: But anyway, Ron had roles in those and in subsequent fundraising as well. Ron was absolutely committed to the college. If I went to an Oakes College meeting, Ron was the person I felt most simpatico with. We talked the same language. I think he got me. He got along great with Roberto. There was nothing ideological. Ron was also a key part of the development of the college. He kept us on track. He kept us from going off into weird little places. And think about it, this was a college effort being led by junior faculty, so we didn't know what the hell we were doing. We could easily get sidetracked. I think Ron was a really important part of the beginnings of the college. Ron remains very close today to Herman.

So a few other people. One, his name was Allen Fields. He was a black sociologist and he was an interesting character, ultimately did not get tenure, and moved on. I think he stayed on campus in some other role, like a counseling role, for a number of years.

And there was also a woman sociologist who I have seen more recently, Pat Bourne, a very articulate woman. Very committed. Really committed to the college. An active participant in college affairs. She did a lot for the college. She was always present at meetings. Again, I think she was somebody else who, I don't know if she was denied tenure or if she just left knowing she wouldn't get tenure.

Reti: She was a strong feminist, if I remember right.

Blumenthal: Oh, no question about that.

Reti: She taught early women's studies around here.

Blumenthal: No question about that. I ran into her a few years ago. I think she was on campus for something and we had a lovely talk. She ended up somewhere in the Bay Area. I can't remember whether she was an instructor at a liberal arts college, or whether she was doing other kind of work, but it was still quasi-academic, if not academic. It sounded to me like she had a pretty nice life. I was very pleased when I saw her. She had aged well and had really done some good work in her life. I wasn't that close to her, but I did admire her commitment to the work.

There were the mathematicians. There was Bruce Cooperstein, who joined a couple of years after the college started.⁶¹ Bruce was very committed. In fact, one time he taught a calculus course and I taught the second quarter of that calculus course, which was, by the way, the easiest course I ever taught because all I had to do was look in the book at the next section and think about it for a few minutes and come in and teach it. As long as I was patient with the students, and kept answering their questions as many times as they wanted to ask, it worked just fine. I enjoyed the class and got good ratings for it. I didn't know a thing about teaching math. I just did it.

There was Arthur Fischer—I don't know what he taught in the college.⁶² I sometimes wonder whether Arthur was in the college because that's where he got placed. Hard to know. Arthur was this brilliant young man, somewhat immature at the time. He won an award for writing an outstanding national essay on gravity. His work, I never understood, it was on general relativity, which I know pretty well, but he was very mathematical in his approach, and I never fully comprehended what he had done. I think he left the college relatively early.

Another senior person I forgot to mention was Art Pearl.⁶³ He was in education. Art is one of the most interesting people you could ever talk to. A very interesting guy. Very political. But he was involved in the college. He did come to meetings. There'd often be meetings where he'd be the only senior person there. He was more committed, in some ways, or more present than most of the others.

Bill Doyle always tended to come to things, but Bill wasn't as outspoken, by any stretch of the imagination, as Art was. But Art was not the mentor-type senior person. He wasn't like the senior person who kept us all on the straight and narrow. (Reti laughs) Art would be more inclined to push us off the straight and narrow than to keep us on it. And that was part of his charm. But he was very much present and I enjoyed him very much.

Then, a couple of biologists to mention. The first one is Victor Rocha. Victor was a biologist, and he was one of the founding members. Victor was there from day one. Victor's birthday is, I think, the same as mine, which I know because later on his girlfriend and my then-girlfriend threw a surprise party for both of us. My girlfriend later became my wife. (laughs) Victor was a biologist. Again, a great guy. Really committed to education. Very involved in the formation of the college. He did get tenure, but I think ten years later, he left UCSC to become the dean of arts and sciences at California State University, San Marcos. I know he was there for a long, long, long, long time. I don't know where he is today. I liked Victor a lot. I remember once doing a program with Victor for high school teachers in minority schools in Los Angeles. They brought up a hundred high school teachers and they asked me and Victor to come meet with them to talk about what students need to learn.

I went first, which is always a mistake. The teacher started asking me whether or not we needed to cover this kind of magnetism, or that kind of dynamics, or rotating frames of

references. They kept asking me these questions, and I kept saying, “I don’t care.” My answer was, “All I care about is when you teach students physics in high school, is that they learn to solve problems. If you spend the year and do nothing more than classical mechanics, and don’t cover anything else, but if they learn to solve problems, you will have done them a real service and prepared them for college. In terms of the breadth of material, they can get that in college. But the problem-solving ability, the ability to analyze, that’s what you need to teach them.”

They kept pushing back because for them, it was all about what’s the range of material that we needed to have covered. They thought I was really weird for saying things the way I did.

Then they brought up Victor to talk to the biology people there, and they started asking him questions. He was so funny. He said, “Everything George Blumenthal said stands for me, too. Even as a biologist, I want your students to solve problems. I don’t care what they cover.”

Reti: It sounds kind of like teaching students how to write. That’s essentially critical thinking.

Blumenthal: Yeah. That’s exactly it—the critical thinking, the analysis, to be able to visualize things, to think about things in a more mathematical way. So anyway, that was kind of cool. Victor was a great guy. Victor and I also later taught a course together on the origin of life.

In terms of my teaching at Oakes, Herman wanted us to teach two courses. For me, that was a real struggle because I was teaching in my department and I was trying to do high-powered research. I offered a section of physics for Oakes students. So it wasn’t really a course, but nobody complained that I was doing it, so I did it. And then, I thought it would

be fun to try to co-teach some courses with other people. That way I'd also learn something. I remember one year there were a bunch of us that taught a course on energy. I can't remember who was all involved in it now. It may have been Todd Wipke, because I think he joined a few years later as a fellow.⁶⁴ I taught this course on energy. I co-taught it with a chemist and I forget who else, but there were several of us who taught this together. The course was pretty much a failure, from my perspective. I don't think the students liked it that well. There were three or four of us that co-taught this course. It was too many chefs in the kitchen, so to speak. It wasn't that well-coordinated. We each had our special things that we wanted to talk about. And the students were very political. Energy's a very political thing, and ideology kept coming into it. I wanted to cover some basic science and have students come away with an understanding of the basic science behind something that's of current interest. From a lot of students' perspective, they were looking for an ideological handle on this, which I, for one, was not willing to go to in that course. So from my perspective, the course was not a success.

But having had one failure, Victor and I talked about a course on the origin of life, which I think we taught a couple of times. He taught the cellular origin of life. What is life? What does it look like on earth? What's the cellular basis of it? What's DNA? And I talked about life from the standpoint of the universe. Where do the elements that compose our body come from? How did the earth come about? The second generation of stars produced the earth. We know it's the second generation because we have things like calcium and phosphorous and oxygen. Those weren't there in the original soup. So we are recycled stardust.

Reti: Wow, recycled.

Blumenthal: So we taught about that, taught a little bit about how the earth came about, and then talked about searches for life in the universe. So that was my piece of the course. It worked. It worked really well. Students liked it. We liked it. I learned a lot from Victor. I think he learned a lot from me. It was a really good course. So I found that a great experience. Victor was something special. I was glad when he became a dean. I'm kind of sorry that once he left, I lost touch with him.

Another biologist who was there at, not from the beginning, a few years later, was Frank Talamantes.⁶⁵ Frank was pure energy. Frank had energy to do everything. He was very involved with students. He was very involved with teaching. He had a humongous research program. He had come from Berkeley, where he did his graduate degree. And Frank was an operator. He got lots of grants. He knew how to work the system in many different contexts. I was in admiration of Frank. I still am. I heard that last week he passed away, which I was very sorry to hear. He had moved from campus to Texas. San Antonio, I think. Many years ago.

Reti: He was one of the founders of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science. SACNAS, right?⁶⁶

Blumenthal: Yes. That was here. Absolutely. He had his fingers in lots and lots and lots of things. He got things going.

I pushed for Frank to be appointed graduate dean. But I have to say, he wasn't a particularly successful graduate dean. I pushed for him because I thought Frank was a catalyst who would make a zillion things happen. But the problem is, the graduate dean also has to make them happen successfully. I think he was just stretched too thin, but his intentions were always great. It's not that he was terrible; it's just that he wasn't as

successful as I might have hoped when he was appointed. But Frank was a really, really good guy. I was in awe of his energy and his ability to do a million things at once.

Leslie Hodges was a woman chemist who was in Oakes College. And there was another woman chemist as well, Eve Anderson. They were both in the college. Eve was married to Roger Anderson and they later got divorced, relatively soon after she arrived. They had three kids. I interacted a lot more with Leslie, who was really committed to the work of the college. A very serious woman. You couldn't joke around a lot with Leslie. She wasn't funny. You know, sometimes you crack jokes, some people don't laugh. She was one of those. It didn't mean she wasn't a nice person or a good person. She was very serious. She was really committed. I thought that she should have got more credit for things that went on in the college than she did. I also thought that Leslie probably deserved more consideration and more help in getting tenure on the campus. When she came up for tenure some years later, I was invited to the chemistry department to make a presentation on her behalf about why she should be granted tenure, at least from an Oakes College perspective. So I went, and I really did make the case. People in chemistry treated me politely, but I also got the impression that this was all pro forma, that they had made up their minds, and that this was covering themselves to say that they had carefully taken into account all of the considerations. I have no idea what her publication record is. Maybe she didn't deserve tenure. I don't know. I never looked at her file. I never tried to examine that. But I do know that from the standpoint of Oakes College, she did a lot, and deserved a lot of credit for the work that she did there. I was sorry to see her go. A very, very decent woman.

Eve Anderson, after her divorce from Roger, she ended up marrying George Hammond, who was a chemist, also, a very, very famous chemist. He was vice chancellor of physical

and biological sciences. So they got married. Then at a certain point they moved somewhere else, to the East Coast, and I lost track of her.

Ed Dirks was the vice chancellor of humanities, and he was a fellow of Oakes College.⁶⁷ He occasionally came to meetings. He was not heavily involved, but he was very supportive. When he did show up, he was always very supportive, very open. I liked Ed. There were a couple of meetings at his house. He lived on Highland, or just off Highland. He had this gorgeous ocean view from up there. The irony is that years later, of course, I came to know his son, Nick Dirks, who became the chancellor at UC Berkeley.⁶⁸

Reti: How was Oakes looked at by the rest of campus?

Blumenthal: Well, that's a good question. I think there was a high level of legitimacy of Oakes from the rest of the campus, almost surprisingly so. The issue wasn't Oakes College. The issue was colleges. To the extent that there was skepticism, etcetera, it was about colleges and college service, per se, much more so than it was about Oakes. I never felt like people were saying, "Oh, well the other colleges are good, but not Oakes." It is true that there were the traditional colleges—the Cowells and the Crowns, in particular, maybe to some extent even Stevenson—that were the traditional colleges. I always had a sense that this is where the senior of the senior people congregated. They had their wine parties at Crown. People went over to Crown College so they could drink wine every week, or sherry, or whatever they drank. I don't drink alcohol, so to me it's one and the same. In those days I didn't know as much about Cowell College, although I suspect Cowell was a much better place. I knew that Herman had come out of Cowell College. I knew that Cowell College had been supportive of him, both when he was there, and later, in his desire to move over to found Oakes College. So I had a fairly positive feeling about Cowell College in those days.

Crown was a different story, because it was so science oriented. These were my colleagues, but almost all of them were very senior and very committed to the old ways. So part of me was really glad that I wasn't at Crown College. Had you just asked me when I arrived, well which college should I join, if I looked around and said well, where's everybody else? They would have said Crown. And maybe I would have joined Crown. But the truth is, I would have been very unhappy in that environment. I was so happy that I got to do something very, very different.

The good news for me is that my closest colleague was Bill Mathews. Bill had made a point of joining Porter College because of his music interests. That was a good model for me.

Reti: Did you have much interaction with Kenneth Thimann?

Blumenthal: Not really. I knew him slightly and he knew me slightly. But not a lot. My sense was that Ken was not all that supportive of some of the colleges.

One of the other early faculty members was Lincoln Taiz.⁶⁹ Lincoln was hired into Oakes College. He is a biologist. I like Lincoln. He did good things. We had good discussions. But within a year or two of his being hired into Oakes College, he switched to Crown College. He said that he was pressured into doing this by Ken Thimann. You'd have to ask him whether that was the case. I remember that was the story, but I never was sure whether that was the whole story.

Reti: But you didn't experience that pressure yourself?

Blumenthal: No.

Reti: But you weren't in biology, either.

Blumenthal: No. And frankly, in my department, among the super senior people, none of them were in colleges. The only one who really had any real college activity was Bob Kraft, who was in Stevenson, and really enjoyed his Stevenson experience. I guess Don Osterbrock was in Crown.⁷⁰ Yeah, Bill Mathews was in Porter, but Bill was relatively junior. Bill got tenure at San Diego and then he gave up tenure to come to Santa Cruz. So he came here as an assistant professor.

So, let me say a few things about some of our notable events in the college. Herman had this thing about coming and visiting faculty in their offices. He made a point every year that he would visit every faculty member in their office, whether their office was at Oakes, or whether it was on Science Hill. He would talk to them about how things were going, about their perceptions. Again, you've got to remember, I came here at twenty-five. I had a long beard. I was really shy. My personality today is so different than it was then. I'm much more outgoing, much more adept in social circumstances than I was in those days. I was very shy, very reticent.

So Herman came to see me, and he was very nice. He started out by asking me about what I did in my department, what kind of research I did, what kind of teaching I did. He was very, very nice about all of that, and seemed genuinely interested in me, which was very nice. Then he started asking me how things were going at Oakes, from my perspective. So we talked about some of the stuff that was going on.

Then I said, "You know, Herman, I've got to tell you this, though. From my perspective as a young faculty member who doesn't know anything, this is a really strange place." I said, "Here I am, I'm teaching courses for my department, which couldn't care less whether I'm teaching courses in my college or not. But as far as they're concerned, they're not going to reduce my teaching load for teaching courses in the college. I'm teaching in the college

two courses, because that's the requirement at Oakes College, which is more than any other college. I'm one of the founders of the college, working very hard," on whatever it was I was working on that year. I was on several college committees. I said, "The funny thing is, I'm on several committees for my board of studies. And some of them are the same committee." (Reti laughs) I said, "This is nuts." I said, "I'm a theorist, so I can work anytime. I don't have a lab." But I said, "You know, if somebody called me up to come to a meeting at Oakes College and I said, 'No, I've set aside three to five p.m. to think about my research,' they'd be really mad at me. So I wouldn't do that. On the other hand, I don't get time to think about what I'm actually doing, and what I'm going to be judged on when I ultimately come up for tenure. That's a really strange situation. And what makes it even more strange," I said, "was here we are, the majority of the people doing the work at Oakes College, the planning, are junior faculty, which is in many ways good, because we're not stuck in the old ways. On the other hand, it's an extra burden on the people who can least afford it." I said, "This is a problem, and it's something we have to be able to address head on." I said, "I'm sorry to bend your ear this way." I was really apologetic.

He was very nice. He said, "No, no. This is exactly why I'm coming, having these meetings, to hear from you what's on your mind and what your perception is." He said he really wanted to thank me for how frank I was and how honest I was. He said, "I want you to know, I feel good about what you've said, not bad about what you said."

So he went away, and all was well. I didn't worry about it a whole lot more. Until the next morning, I get a call from Herman. He said, "George, I've been thinking about our conversation all night. I need your voice. I'd like you to join the executive committee of the college." (laughter)

Reti: Oh, God! (laughter)

Blumenthal: And it's true. I mean, it's absolutely true. Of course, I said yes. Years later, I kidded him about that. But the truth is, I was a different voice on the executive committee. I think he was wise. From where I sit today, I am so grateful that he asked me to do this, because I learned so much. I was so uninformed, so naïve in those days. I learned a lot about people, about how universities and colleges work, about processes, about how to get stuff done, about how to work with disparate people who might not easily come to an agreement. I learned so much from that experience. For me personally, it was a real growth experience. Since we met at night, I didn't particularly mind it. I was single. I didn't care. So for me it was a big plus. I really enjoyed meeting at Diane's house. I thought it was so cool that we could do this for somebody who was a single mother. I could understand the constraints that were on her. It was kind of really cool.

Reti: Wow. That's a remarkable story in many ways.

So the other big notable thing that happened in the early years was planning of the college and the planning of the science center for the college. Herman really wanted science to be a big thing. And one of the things he found in his travels was St. Andrews University in Laurinburg, North Carolina that had developed a unique kind of science center, with a unique way of doing laboratories and having flexibility, where you could move benches around, you could have many different configurations, and do it in a way that gave maximum flexibility given that you had only a small facility. Herman saw it and really liked it, and was interested in whether or not we should replicate that at Oakes College. So he wanted a couple of the scientists to come on a trip with him to North Carolina to look at this college. Bill Doyle was one of them, which made total sense. He asked me to be the other, which I thought made absolutely no sense, because I'm not a laboratory scientist. You know more about laboratory sciences than I do. Not quite. (Reti laughs) You know what I mean.

Reti: Right. You were a theoretical physicist.

Blumenthal: Yeah. But Herman was insistent. I can't remember the reasons. It may have been that since Bill was a biologist and the other lab scientists were all biologists, he wanted somebody from the physical sciences. I don't think we had anyone else in the physical sciences at Oakes. Jim Gill, I guess, but Jim is more of an earth scientist. I'm the one with the PhD in physics, although Leslie Hodges would have been a logical choice, too, to be honest with you. So why me, rather than Leslie, I cannot tell you. But for whatever reason, Herman wanted me to do this. So I said sure.

So we went to North Carolina. This was a very transformative trip for me, in a couple of ways. One was we toured the college and we toured their facility and we liked it. Bill and I agreed, this is what Oakes College should do. And ultimately, that's what Oakes College did. We built the science center, which is now the events center, so it's not really used for the same purposes anymore. But it was used for that purpose for many years, as part of the Oakes Science Center. We just did it, and we pretty much mimicked what they had there. We didn't think there was a real need to do anything differently. They had done a really careful job. So that was just one piece of it.

Then we went to someplace in South Carolina where Herman's dad lived, so we visited his dad. That was a real trip. His dad was a character. It was so much fun. We went there. I think we had dinner there with him. He was so different than anything I'd experienced in my life. Very Southern. Very black. Very good sense of humor. He's one of those people you sit and listen to kind of bemusedly, and could listen to all night. He'd exposed me to something I'd never experienced before. I really enjoyed meeting Herman's father. Really did.

Then we went to, I think Charleston, and we stayed overnight at a retreat there. We stayed in the same place Martin Luther King stayed when he went to this retreat. It was just so awe-inspiring to think that I was sleeping in the same room that Martin Luther King slept in. I mean, can you imagine? It could have been a ramshackle shack, and it would have still been an awe-inspiring—but it wasn't. It was a nice conference center.

From there, we went to Daufuskie Island. Herman did research there. He had a house on Daufuskie, Herman did. Daufuskie was, at the time, completely undeveloped. The next island over was Hilton Head, which was a fancy resort. But Daufuskie was completely undeveloped. The descendants of the original Gullah people were living there. It was very poor. It was very rural. They were very close, very much connected to each other within the community. It was a fascinating place. I understood, being there, why Herman wanted, as a sociologist, to study the island. It was very interesting. At the end of the Civil War, this was a way station. Slaves would be dropped off there and then later picked up and brought to the mainland and sold as slaves. But when slavery ended, and the Civil War ended, there were these people on the island. They'd been left there and they became the residents of the island. So they all descended from more or less the same time. They weren't necessarily related to each other originally. But they descended, and a lot of intermarriage. Many of them left the island. Joe Frazier, who Ali lost a fight to, came from the island. The Thrilla in Manila. People there did talk about him a little bit to me.

Anyway, it was a really rural place. They had so far avoided being developed like Hilton Head. People did not sell their homes to developers. Herman had bought a house there because he wanted to be there a lot, to study and be a part of that community. There were several of us traveling together. It was Bill and me, and by then we had picked up a couple of students from Oakes College. We picked them up maybe in South Carolina or

somewhere. They traveled with us. You had to go by boat to the island. Herman placed us all in different houses.

Reti: With people's families. That's what he did with the students.

Blumenthal: With people. Yes. That's what he did with us. I stayed with Miss Hamilton, who was kind of an elderly woman, maybe in her sixties. I mean, I was twenty-six, twenty-seven, so anyone over forty seemed old to me. A very nice woman. Very solicitous. Very sweet. I remember I went to bed in her spare bedroom. I took off my glasses and I didn't see very well without my glasses. I lay down. Before I turned out the light, I looked around the room. I saw across the room on the dresser a picture of what I thought was a naked white woman. I was kind of shocked. You couldn't imagine something being less likely to be in a house like that.

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: And so, of course, I put on my glasses and got up and went over to look at it. It was the cover of the cardboard thing that covers stockings, the way you used to be able to buy stockings. She had put that up as a picture because she liked it. I was fascinated by that, that she would regard that as something worthy of display. She was very nice. Very solicitous. I'm sure she was just doing Herman a favor, but I felt really warm being there. I enjoyed talking with her. She was a nice woman.

Then the next morning, we all met. Herman was off doing something, so Bill and I and the two students decided—there was a dirt road that ran the length of the island—and we were told that at the end of the island there were these tabby huts—you know what I'm talking about?

Reti: I've heard of them.

Blumenthal: Yeah. That's where slaves were kept. They were kept in those tabby huts when they were dropped off on the island. So we thought we'd walk down to the end of the island and see the tabby huts, although we'd also heard there were a lot of rattlesnakes down there. So we were a little bit concerned about that.

We're walking down the road quite happily. There were people out. We were still in the residential area and there were kids out there playing in the street. And at one point we came to a bunch of kids and they said to us, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, we're walking down to the tabby huts." They said, "Oh, yeah, we play down there all the time." Then one of the women students said, "Well, do you worry about the snakes?" I'll never forget what the kid said. He said, "No, we don't worry about the snakes. They only bite white people."

Reti: (laughs) I love it.

Blumenthal: (laughs) I will never forget that. So we did, in fact, walk down there. We looked at the tabby huts. We stayed away from rocks, turning over rocks and it was fine. But those huts were just that. They were remnants of old huts. Not much shelter at all. They were pretty rundown by that time but you could tell they were never exactly luxurious places.

That was for me a very meaningful visit. I think we spent two or three days on the island and I really enjoyed it. It was an experience like something I'd never had before. Remember, naïve kid. That's who I was. It was great.

I never went back, but years later, I talked to Herman, and Herman told me that most of the island had been sold to developers and it was now very heavily developed, which he wasn't happy about. It made me realize, I cannot go back to Daufuskie. To me, Daufuskie is a memory. I don't want to see it today because it would just upset me.

Reti: I had no idea. I imagined it being the way I always have heard people talk about it. And so Herman was taking you there because he wanted to show you part of the world that he was connecting with, and the work he was doing, and students were going to?

Blumenthal: I think it was a combination of things. He took a lot of students there over the years, so why not take a couple of colleagues, too? He wanted to introduce us to something that had to do with his life and what he was interested in. And I think he thought maybe we would find it an interesting experience, which I certainly did. I was fascinated by that time on the island. It was, again, so different than anything else I had done in my life. I was so grateful to him for having done that, and remain grateful. So that was the trip to Daufuskie.

The college continued to develop. I think it was quite successful, particularly in those early years. The development of the science center was exciting. That worked well. Again, it wasn't my thing to work with labs, so I didn't particularly care how well it was working in a personal sense. But in a professional sense, I was glad that it seemed to be working very well in those years.

The college evolved. One year, Herman went on leave, so Bill Doyle was the acting provost. I remember there were some issues among students at the time, but it all got straightened out and everyone eventually came back. Herman stayed on the order of eight, ten years. We used to have these lecture series on campus called professors' inaugural lectures. When I gave mine, which had to be in the very early '80s, he was still there, because I asked him to introduce me.

But then Herman decided to leave and go to Tougaloo. And for me, that was a really hard decision to accept. It was hard to think about Oakes College without Herman Blake. I was happy for him if this was something he wanted to do. By then, he was remarried to his

then-wife Maria. I think he had divorced his first wife some years earlier. He did not talk a lot about his family in those days, although later I got to know his children. But he got remarried. I liked Maria a lot. They had a baby together. He was sort of the Oakes College baby. That was all very cool.

But I remember being at the provost house one night. I think Kelly was there, too. We talked about Herman's leaving. I remember he said something that really disturbed me. He said when they had hired him, he was really looking forward to going to Tougaloo. But after he came back from being hired and everything was signed, the chair of the board of trustees called him up and said, "Well, you're a Baptist, aren't you?" Herman said, "I told him that was none of his business." When he said that, I realized that this was not necessarily going to work, that this was a disjuncture. I felt ill at ease hearing that story.

In fact, it was true. I think he left within two years of going to Tougaloo. I think it was a complete cultural mismatch. He had more California in him and more anti-establishment. He was not the traditional Baptist college president and he had no desire to be that. So it was a mismatch and he left, moved on, I think, to Indianapolis.

Reti: Did you have a sense of why he left UCSC?

Blumenthal: I think opportunity. He was still relatively young and he had opportunity in front of him. He wanted to make a broader difference. Oakes College was humming along, though by that time, reaggregation had occurred, so it wasn't the same place already that it had been earlier. I basically stopped teaching at the college at a certain point. It was clear that the kinds of college courses that we'd been offering were just not sustainable into the distant future. I think he saw a real change there. Sure, the core course was still going on, and maybe a few other courses. People like Roberto may have kept teaching, but the academic offerings were much less than they had been earlier, so

Herman may have felt a little disaffected with that change. But also, he had an opportunity. He was a man on the rise. I think he deserved to rise. Looking back on it, I think he made the wrong choice. But you know, hindsight—

I was sorry to see him leave. His successor, whose name was Sucheng Chan, was a nice person.⁷¹ I liked her personally. I think she meant well. But she did not culturally fit with the college at all. She only served a year or two at most before she left the campus. She sensed that she wasn't fitting in. This wasn't anyone's fault. She was a bad choice for the college to have made and it was a bad choice for her to come. She had been at Berkeley and she may have underestimated the way the college could really adapt to her style. There's no villain here. It just was a match that wasn't made in heaven. I tried to help her. Even though I wasn't as heavily involved anymore, I sensed the issues. But by the time I got heavily involved in trying to help her, the die was already cast. There were too many people over there who were just really put off by her. I don't remember the details. It was a personality mismatch and I think it may have been somewhat philosophical, too.

David Anthony was there for a long time [1996-2002].⁷² He was a good guy. I think he did a great job. I really like David. I think David is very, very special, and I think underappreciated on this campus.

My involvement started to drain away when we did reaggregation and then reorganization.⁷³ But I didn't reaggregate. I stayed in Oakes and I remain in Oakes to this day. I had no desire to leave the college. I still remain committed to the college. My involvement in the college has been highly episodic since then. Sometimes I've been involved in some things, and then sometimes they haven't seen me for long periods of time. It's really changed over time. I really didn't want to leave, but I didn't want to stay as committed to it.

Stepping Beyond Campus: the City of Santa Cruz During the 1970s

Reti: So today is October 22, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I'm here with Chancellor Blumenthal for our seventh interview. We're going to start out today by talking about what the city of Santa Cruz was like during the seventies and what kinds of activities you might have been involved in in the community.

Blumenthal: I moved here in the spring of 1972. I knew very little about the city of Santa Cruz when I arrived here. I'd been in Santa Cruz twice before—once for my interview and once a few years earlier as a graduate student. I knew nothing about the local politics. I knew that when Bill and Cynthia Mathews moved up here, one of Cynthia's first acts was to open a Planned Parenthood office across the street from the high school, which I thought was such a cool idea. I think I knew that Planned Parenthood was a big deal in town at the time because there used to be an annual picnic or outing or fundraising thing. It was a zucchini festival. So I knew that, but I knew relatively little about the politics. So I was actually somewhat surprised to discover how conservative the community of Santa Cruz was when I first arrived here.

Within six to nine months of coming to Santa Cruz, I moved to another apartment on Merrill Street and lived in Live Oak for a few years, I think until 1976. I remember not long after I moved in, there was an election for county supervisor. I knew really relatively little about county politics. I followed stuff that was going on in the city, and of course I followed some state and federal politics. But I knew relatively little about the county.

One day I was at home and this guy, Phil Baldwin, came by. He was campaigning. I chatted with him for a few minutes. Turns out he was a teacher. He seemed like a very reasonable guy. So when the election came, I happily voted for him. It turns out he was elected, to everyone's shock and surprise, but he was really detested by some of the powers-that-be

in county politics. So they organized a recall election and successfully recalled him and removed him from office. So far as I can recall, there was no cause. It's not like he did something wrong, other than carrying a liberal brand. But these were really contentious times, and some of the county folks that were in power were remarkably conservative. There was a woman by the name of Marilyn Liddicoat who was extremely right wing. She was a county supervisor and very powerful in the county. The county was dominated by conservative political forces and when Baldwin got elected, that was a shock to their system.

In general, things really began to change once we got into the seventies. I'm not sure exactly when it was that students got the right to vote.⁷⁴ When I got here, there were maybe three or four thousand students on campus, so there weren't a lot of students, and most of them wouldn't have voted anyway. But when students did get the right to vote, they started voting. Even if it was in small numbers, that made a big difference in a place like Santa Cruz, which, in those days, had maybe thirty thousand total residents and maybe a voting population, I'm guessing, of ten thousand. So adding a couple thousand students could make a huge difference in that kind of politics, particularly within the city. The student vote, coupled with the fact that so many alums in those days were staying in Santa Cruz, caused a tremendous change in the local politics. So the city council fairly quickly became more moderate and more divided, with real liberal factions. I remember one year when a group of people ran for council on a feminist platform. I think virtually all of them won. Mike Rotkin was one.⁷⁵ Bruce Van Allen was another. I can't remember who the others were.

The county was much slower to change, however. There were lawsuits within Santa Cruz challenging the validity of student voting, arguing that eighteen-year-olds may have the right to vote, but one didn't have the right to vote on a campus. Those lawsuits took a

while to resolve. It was, to say the least, contentious locally. Change is always hard, but in Santa Cruz, that was not an easy change.

It is ironic to think about this in the context of Governor Pat Brown, the Governor Brown who supported higher education. He had this famous quote that pointed out that when he ran for governor in 1960, he carried every county in California except three, so he decided to put a UC campus in each of them.

Reti: (laughs) He really did say that?

Blumenthal: He did really say that. I'm not sure that was his only motivation. But, in fact, look at how that's turned out—San Diego County is now more Democratic than not; Orange County is purple; and Santa Cruz County is very blue. So he had a certain wisdom in this, method to his madness, so to speak.

But change didn't come easily here. There was a lot of bitterness, bitterness toward the university, bitterness toward students among some of the local population. I think that the pendulum even swung pretty far. There were times, ultimately, by the time we got into the late '70s, early '80s, when some of the local politics was pretty left-wing, and pretty radical.

Reti: It changed very quickly.

Blumenthal: When I got here, the first local issue that I found interesting concerned Lighthouse Field.⁷⁶ There was a proposal before the city council and the planning commission to convert Lighthouse Field into two things: a condominium complex and a big shopping center. That was the proposal on the table that was before the planning commission. It was very controversial in Santa Cruz, as you might imagine, so the planning commission held public hearings. I attended a few of those and I was appalled

at the planning that was going into this. I think one of my few contributions to that discussion was I read the report of the traffic consultants. Traffic was something I understand because it's just numbers. I looked at their numbers for total traffic and was kind of shocked by it because if you think about it, Lighthouse Field is accessible only through residential streets. There are no thoroughfares to Lighthouse Field. And they were talking about a number of car visits per day. When you actually looked at it, it was equal to the number of seconds in a day. So there would be like one car per second averaged over a day (assuming it was uniform) to Lighthouse Field. It was ridiculous. I pointed out how, in some ways, ridiculous some of the traffic assessments were for Lighthouse Field. It simply wouldn't have worked, given the infrastructure within the city.

Ultimately it was rejected. I think that was a good thing. This was one of Gary Patton's first major forays into local politics. He was one of the leaders to stop Lighthouse Field, and I think it is to his credit that it succeeded. Of course, ultimately Lighthouse Field was made into a park, which was a completely appropriate and really a good choice for that land. So it ended up having a happy ending, but it was not an easy pathway. Can you just imagine what Santa Cruz would have been like had that succeeded?

Reti: It was a road not taken. It was one of those watershed moments.

Blumenthal: So that was the Lighthouse Field story.

Reti: There was another event that took place, I don't know if you were involved, which was opposing a large development at Wilder Ranch.

Blumenthal: Oh, Wilder Ranch. I do remember that. Wilder Ranch is north of Santa Cruz. I think there was a big housing development proposed up there. And the issue there was both the issues of growth, but also the issues of the environment. There was land there that was deemed somewhat sensitive in terms of its ecological needs. I was well

aware of the controversy. I did not get involved in it, though. I was much more concerned with things inside the city. Again, I was a young faculty member, so I had a limited amount of time.

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: I wanted to choose my battles. Somehow that didn't excite me as much as Lighthouse Field. Not that I was not opposed to Wilder Ranch, but—

Reti: Sure. You have to pick your issues. Right. Okay. Thank you. Did you have more you wanted to say about the city at that time?

Blumenthal: At that time, no. I got again involved a little bit later on. But I'll get to that. After we bought our house.

Key Figures at UCSC in the 1970s

Reti: Okay. Do you want to move on to talking about some of the key figures?

Blumenthal: Sure. So I'll talk about some of the key figures in the early campus. I want to preface this by saying, you have to understand, I got here in '72. People had changed by the time 1972 had rolled around. They weren't necessarily the same people that they were at earlier times.

The primo example of that was Page Smith.⁷⁷ When I got here, I had no idea who Page Smith was. I'd never heard of him. I'm not a historian. And since I wasn't associated with Cowell, I had not really paid much attention to the previous leadership at Cowell College. So I really didn't know much about him at all. Two things made me aware of him. One was the controversies surrounding the Paul Lee denial of tenure. Paul Lee was an assistant professor of, I think philosophy in Cowell College.⁷⁸ I know Paul to this day.⁷⁹ I like Paul,

actually. He's still around. I think he's a good guy. He had a reputation of being an excellent teacher and a really committed teacher. He was denied tenure, presumably because his scholarly research was deemed wanting, either in quantity or quality, I have no idea. I had no role in that. But what I do know is that Page Smith was furious about that. It didn't just happen one day. This was something that was building.

The reason I know this is because soon after I arrived, Page Smith called a campus-wide meeting of all of the assistant professors on campus. It was billed as a meeting to counsel us and help us prepare for the rigors of assistant professorship, so to speak. I went to that meeting thinking that this was going to be a counseling session, or a session where some sage old person would be giving us advice. It turned into more of a diatribe against the university and against the way that we did business. I have to say, I was not impressed at that meeting with Page Smith. My reaction was gee, there's this bitter old guy complaining about stuff (laughs) and I didn't want to go there. I'm sorry, that was my introduction to Page Smith. That's completely inconsistent, of course, with his role on the campus and the many outstanding things that he did on campus. I don't mean, in any sense, to diminish the key role he had at the beginning of campus. I was relatively unaware of that, or if I was aware, I didn't know a lot about him. All I could judge was the person who showed up. That person was bitter and angry and conveyed it to us. It felt like he was trying to foment revolution among the assistant professors and I just wasn't interested and ready to go there.

Reti: What did he want you to do?

Blumenthal: It wasn't clear, but he was angry and he was trying to rally the crowd to be angry along with him. So I was not impressed at that meeting. When they called the second meeting a few weeks later, I decided not to go. I didn't participate. In a way, now

I kind of regret it because I regret not appreciating the role that he played and how special he was in so many people's lives. I think it would have been interesting for me to try to get to know the side of him that was the great Page Smith, one of the moral leaders of the campus, one of the visionaries of this campus. Had I appreciated his role, I probably would have done that. But I just had no idea. I just judged what I saw at that time. It was only some years later that I really came to appreciate Page's impact on the campus and on people. And at first it was very hard for me to reconcile my impression. Ultimately Page did resign from the university in disgust. He was very angry at McHenry. He lived, I presume, somewhere locally, because he later wrote a couple more books after his retirement.

Reti: He was angry with McHenry about Paul Lee not getting tenure.

Blumenthal: About Paul Lee and just the general tenure policy of the university. But in defense of McHenry, the Academic Personnel Manual is a systemwide document and theoretically the criteria for tenure is a systemwide set of criteria. I don't know Paul Lee's record. I like Paul, and we joke. One time, I once was chatting with Paul and I said, "Is there anything I can do for you?" And he said, "Yeah, grant me tenure." (laughter)

I don't know the story of the merits of that case, but I suspect that probably both McHenry and Page Smith were right. That's my suspicion. Paul was probably somebody who contributed greatly to building the institution, and was an outstanding teacher. My guess is, I have no evidence, that maybe his scholarship wasn't ranked as highly, and on that basis, McHenry probably made the decision that he made, feeling that he had to be consistent with systemwide standards. That infuriated Page Smith. I can understand where they were all coming from. But it is what it is. But Page could not let it go. He was not ready to move on. I don't know whether any of the other assistant professors who were

at that first meeting were taken under his thumb. (sighs) That's pretty much all I have on Page Smith.

Reti: You arrived at a very particular historic moment in his trajectory.

Blumenthal: Right, and I just got this snapshot of things as they were. Some of my impressions you're going to hear now are just kind of impressions of people. The next one on my list is Jasper Rose.⁸⁰ I don't quite even know what to say. Jasper Rose, I never figured out. I mainly knew him through Academic Senate meetings, where he would get up in his masterful British accent and make speeches as though he was on the floor of the House of Parliament. I think John Faulkner and I were the only two people from astronomy who regularly attended Academic Senate meetings. I often attended only the first part and then would leave. But I tried to go to all of them, to hear an update from the chancellor and to get a sense of what was going on on campus. That doesn't mean I participated, but I really did try to go to them. I was always mystified that no one else in the department felt the need to do it.

Anyway, Jasper was in some ways almost a comic character because he was always holding forth with great seriousness about things that sometimes didn't deserve that level of seriousness. So I had this kind of strange view of Jasper Rose. He just seemed like a character. It was never clear to me how seriously to take him on campus. Clearly, he was a scholar of some note, but I just couldn't tell, from where I stood.

There is an interesting story from years later. This came from John Faulkner. There were two John Faulknors on campus. One was in, I think, art or art history, and then one was in astronomy. They often got each other's mail. John said when Jasper retired, he got an invitation to Jasper's retirement party and was quite surprised, because he and Jasper had never been close, and had usually been arguing with each other. But he decided, how

nice of Jasper to bury the axe. So he and his wife went to the retirement party. He said when he was there he ran into the other John Faulkner. (Reti laughs) The other John Faulkner said, “You know, it’s really funny. I never got invited to this party. But since I’m so close to Jasper, I—”

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs) That’s great.

Blumenthal: Okay. So that was Jasper Rose. Ken Thimann. Actually another British person, although he was not particularly voluble at senate meetings. I’m not sure how frequently he attended. To the extent that he did, he wasn’t one of the main pugilists, so to speak. I didn’t know Ken that well. But to know Ken was to know how serious he was, and how seriously he should be taken, because he was a scholar of great renown. He had tremendous influence within the science division, and on campus as well. He always seemed sensible to me. I didn’t know him real well, but he was somebody I was quite impressed with.⁸¹

Reti: Tremendous influence, in the sense of being able to build the sciences at UCSC?

Blumenthal: In terms of setting policy for the sciences. When he spoke, people listened. I didn’t hear a lot of people, even argumentative people, argue with Ken Thimann. When he spoke, that kind of ended the argument.

Reti: Now just to follow up a little bit, I do know that Ken Thimann was not a huge fan of Oakes College, at least at the beginning. Was that something that came up in your work? We talked about Oakes last time, but not in relation to Ken Thimann.

Blumenthal: I was aware of the fact that he was no fan of Oakes. But I really need to be honest. I wasn’t all that involved in the nitty gritty of campus politics in the early days. I

paid a lot of attention, and I was interested. But I wasn't a player and I didn't want to be a player.

Reti: I understand.

Blumenthal: I think I've talked about Herman Blake and Ralph Guzman already. I would just emphasize that over the years, Ralph Guzman hasn't got the attention or appreciation that he deserved for his role in starting Oakes College. I think it's too easy to forget about Ralph and I hope the campus will find a way to recognize his role in the beginning of the college.

Bill Doyle's another person from those years.⁸² I mentioned going to see him when I was considering joining Oakes College. I also mentioned being with him on that trip to the South.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: But Bill was much more than that. Bill was crucial in the beginnings of the Coastal Sciences campus. He helped get it going. He was a key player there. Bill was so respected by everyone that he had entrée to every part of campus and had the right to be taken seriously. He also somewhat later became the dean of natural sciences. It might have been vice chancellor in those days. Remember, the title changed from being called vice chancellor to being called dean. So I'm going to call it dean, but with the recognition that it might have been a different title. But he did that for three years. That was important because in the first twelve or thirteen or fourteen years of being on campus, I think we had something like fifteen deans of natural sciences. They came and went like flies. It was the rare dean that lasted more than a year. It was a revolving door.

Reti: Why? Do you know?

Blumenthal: I'm not sure. Part of it was an unwillingness on the part of faculty to take on the position and keep it. Part of it was there were a few who became deans who were real disasters as dean. Some people got job offers elsewhere. A few deans left after a year to go to some other university. So it just felt like a real revolving door.

Bill did it, I think, for three years. Bill lent a stability to the division. I don't remember the exact order of things but then not long after Bill, Dave Kliger came in as dean. Dave was dean for like fifteen or twenty years. He was there for a long time and lent real stability. But I was chair of my department for part of the time that Bill was dean. I think he was a good dean. I also want to acknowledge that in Bob Sinsheimer's oral history he did say some unflattering things about Bill with regard to budget. From again, my bird's eye view as a department chair, I think Bill actually did a good job trying to keep the budget in line. I don't know the specific issues between Sinsheimer and Doyle, but I think Bill deserves more credit than Sinsheimer gave him in his oral history, just to be as blunt as I could be.

Who else? Joe Bunnett was a really important senior leader of the faculty. I believe he was the chair of the Academic Senate when I first started going to senate meetings, maybe not when I absolutely first started, but within a year or so. Bunnett, as chair of the senate, which is how I knew him at the time, was an absolutely solid person. He operated by the rules. He was fair, he was honorable. He was honest. He was a good person. He kept control of the senate, even though there were hot debates about things. He was somebody that I felt I could look up to and wanted to emulate. I was quite impressed with him. I had no idea how eminent he was within the field of chemistry at the time. I mean, I knew he was a chemist, but I had no idea. Even to this day, I don't completely know, but I know that we have a Bunnett lecture series, and I know he's been recognized with a number of awards over the years. So I've come to appreciate that his field has appreciated him. In those days, I didn't know that, but I always found Joe to be completely above board,

completely honorable. To the end of his days, I always had the highest regard for Joe Bunnett, and have come to appreciate what a scholar he was as well.

Don Osterbrock. My goodness. I first met Don Osterbrock when I was a graduate student. I went to a scientific meeting in Florida. I was at a session where he gave a talk. I remember listening to his talk. He was already well known, he was already famous—but I didn't know that. You have to understand, I was a physics graduate student. I took one astronomy course in my entire life. (Reti laughs) There was lots of stuff I didn't know and I didn't know the astronomy community. I heard him give this talk. I don't even remember what it was on anymore. But I remember listening to it and I remember thinking, that is a superlative talk. This guy has a future!

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: (chuckles) Little did I know. So that was my first interaction with Osterbrock. My second interaction was by mail. He was the editor of the *Astrophysical Journal* and the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, which is the major journal in astronomy. I was a post-doc. He sent me a letter to referee. I was perfectly happy to do it. It was in an area that I knew something about. It was on radiation processes. I got this article and I read it and I didn't understand it at all. (laughter) I read it again. I read it about five times and I still didn't understand it. I was really getting panicked, because by then I knew Osterbrock was a big name and I was really reluctant to write back to him and say, "I'm sorry, I just don't understand it, I can't give you a—" I just didn't want to do that. So I read it another five times and I finally figured it out. I finally figured out that the author had used some equation from a book that had been very hard to run down, and had misapplied it. There was just a very elementary set of points that the author had missed. So I ended up writing a very devastatingly negative review of that article, which is not something I

usually do. But I did in this case, and I felt this huge relief that I didn't make a fool of myself in front of Osterbrock.

So then when I showed up here, I was staying with Bill and Cynthia. One night Joe Miller and his wife Nina came over. Their big news was that Don Osterbrock had agreed to come to Santa Cruz. They were absolutely delighted. Joe was a student of Osterbrock's and Bill knew Osterbrock well, so they were really excited. So Osterbrock came to Santa Cruz as the new director of Lick Observatory.

I have to say Osterbrock had, over the years, just a huge influence on me. I don't even know how to describe this. He was an absolutely solid scientist. He could have been a theorist or an observer. He knew a lot of things. His scientific underpinnings was just—"solid" is the word I keep wanting to use. But he was the director of Lick Observatory so he had this huge administrative burden. And he was a guy who always tried to be fair but he was always straightforward. There was no hidden agendas with Osterbrock. I don't think Osterbrock would have known a hidden agenda if he'd tripped over it, you know? That was just not the way he worked. He was always straightforward, easy to talk with. I had many conversations with him.

What was most impressive to me about Osterbrock was that when he came to Santa Cruz, he changed his research emphasis. He had been working on nebulae within the galaxy, basic clumps of gas of one sort or another within the Milky Way. He changed his emphasis and decided when he got here to start studying active galactic nuclei, like quasars. He really studied Seyfert galaxies, which is a form of active galaxy that he became an expert on. But he put in place an observation program. He graduated a whole bunch of graduate students, a huge number of graduate students, over the years and they're all spread around the country in senior positions now. He did all of this and was remarkably

productive. He was the leader in studying Seyfert galaxies and active galaxies in general and he did all of this while he was director of Lick Observatory. I was so impressed with his ability to juggle his administrative responsibilities with being an outstanding scientist. And he was gracious. Don and Irene Osterbrock hosted many dinners at their house, so I had dinner at their house many, many times over the years when there were guests of various sorts who were coming by. And he was just, as I say, a very decent man.

Also, later on when the 10-meter telescope was starting to be a reality, I think Don was not a huge fan of the direction the 10-meter had taken, so he realized that the time had come for him to step down. I think when he stepped down, he did it for the good of the organization, believing that we needed a different leader to take us into the Keck era.

Reti: And the direction meaning what?

Blumenthal: Partly it was collaboration with Caltech, and partly it was the decision to build a segmented mirror, as opposed to a monolithic mirror. He was not comfortable with that ultimate decision. Probably in later years he would have admitted he was wrong. But it doesn't matter. He was a man of principle. I admire that about him. He was always levelheaded. I rarely heard him say a negative word about anyone. When I did hear him on occasion, it was always worth it. (laughs) He was always right. All I can say is I had huge admiration for him as a human being, as a person. He lived the life that he believed in and he lived it ethically and reasonably. What more could anyone ask of a person? He was joyful about astronomy, but he was also a historian. I think people overlook the fact that he wrote several history books.

Reti: Oh, yes. *Eye on the Sky* is a fabulous book.⁸³

Blumenthal: He was a tremendous scholar. And he was also a birdwatcher.

Reti: Really? I didn't know that.

Blumenthal: Birdwatching is not something I'm particularly into, but he was. I admired that as well. I can't speak highly enough of Osterbrock. I'm delighted there's now an Osterbrock fellowship program. I think the Osterbrock fellows are supposed to train students not just to be good scientists, but to be leaders. I think it's aptly named for such a program.

An obvious name to talk about is Bob Kraft. Bob was involved in hiring me. He was the one who got the grant that created the positions, of which I was the last. He was department chair when they first extended me the offer of a position. In fact, it was kind of funny because they offered me an assistant professor step one position which was way below my post-doc salary. But I was ambivalent, as I said, about taking the job. Later he called me up and he said, "Well, we're going to boost it up to step two." (Reti laughs) It was still a big cut in salary. But that wasn't important to me. I didn't even know what a step was.

So Bob, again, a very interesting character as a person. His name really belongs in much of the history of this campus. Bob, when he arrived here, quickly joined Stevenson College, and regarded himself as a key member of Stevenson College. He enjoyed his college affiliation. He talked about it frequently. None of the other of the senior astronomy faculty at the time would talk about that, or had any interest in joining the college. Bob was a much more well-rounded person. He was also someone with an interest in wine. I had many dinners at his house. He loved to show off the many different kinds of wine that he had accumulated.

Bob was also a connoisseur of music. He even taught a course on Beethoven once. A really interesting guy. Bob was both the acting director and the chair of astronomy when I came.

I think he was no longer chair of astronomy when I actually arrived, but he was when I was hired. He was acting director for a few years. Then he became department chair again. He was the department chair that passed the baton to me when I became chair the first time.

Later on, when Don Osterbrock stepped down, Bob became the director. Bob brought us into the Keck era. The building and initial operation of the Keck telescopes were due to Bob's leadership. And Bob had a role in the decision to build the segmented Keck telescope. Have I talked about that yet?

Reti: Not yet.

Blumenthal: Okay, so let me step back. Even though I had no official affiliation with Lick Observatory, I was in the department, (which was then called the board, but I'm just going to use the word *department* for simplicity) but I was invited, as a courtesy, to Lick Observatory meetings, just because I was one of the faculty that was there. And I would go.

Reti: So not everybody in astronomy is affiliated with Lick.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Okay. Thank you for clarifying that.

Blumenthal: Lick is the observational arm. I was a theorist and no one in their right mind would have thought of me as an observer. But again, I was interested, so I attended these meetings. There was real interest in building a new telescope. At one time there was some thought of building something on Chews Ridge. Ultimately there was a group that did build a telescope out there called the Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy.⁸⁴ But there were some environmental concerns, particularly from Native Americans. And

there were concerns that this would destroy the view of the top of the mountain. I still remember sitting in that meeting, and Albert Whitford commented very wistfully. He said, “I just can’t imagine anything more beautiful on the top of a mountain than the dome.” (laughter) Anyway. Somehow that didn’t come to pass, or didn’t get very far.

But then people started thinking about the idea of building a 10-meter telescope. Since that would be almost twice as big as the Palomar telescope, it would be a significant improvement. People felt that the time was right to try to do that. The problem with building bigger telescopes than Palomar was the cost. The cost of the telescope scales with a higher power of its diameter. The reason for that is because of the amount of steel you need to hold up the mirror. Let me put it a different way: when you build a bigger telescope, not only is the diameter bigger, but using traditional methods, it also has to become thicker, the piece of glass, because it has to remain rigid as it moves around the sky.

And so the Palomar telescope, again, I’m making this up, I don’t remember the exact number, but it took a year to cool when they poured the glass.

Reti: Wow. A long time.

Blumenthal: A long time. The point is, it’s a major effort to build a piece of glass that big, and then get it polished to the right shape. But you want it to be inflexible enough that you can point it anywhere in the sky and it won’t lose its shape. So to build bigger telescopes, you have to build much bigger pieces of glass and that required much more steel to hold it up. That’s why it scaled at maybe the two and a half power of the diameter. The cost would scale that high.

People realized this was not doable, and that they had to do something different. The first idea for how to do something different was an idea—it may have started at the University

of Arizona with Roger Angel—but its big advocate within UC was Joe Wampler. It was the idea of a thin mirror. That is, throw caution to the wind and don't build the mirror thicker and thicker and thicker. Build it thin, but put something on the mirror to make it change shape as you move it around the sky, actuators, things that move its shape, so that you could adjust its shape whenever you pointed to a different place in the sky. That was the thin-mirror concept. Joe pushed that. And seemingly, at least in the early days of discussion, it looked like that was the way that UC was going to go.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, there was this guy at Berkeley. I didn't know him at the time. But I kept hearing there was this crazy guy at Berkeley in the Space Sciences Lab named Jerry Nelson who had this cockamamie idea of stress mirror polishing.⁸⁵ The idea there was, why build a single mirror, a monolithic mirror? Why not build segments of the mirror and then cut off the edges so they were all hexagons, and put them all together, and then collectively, all of them together would be one big mirror. But you could adjust each of the hexagons, which are themselves much smaller mirrors. So that would be another way to address this problem.

The problem with that is nobody knew how to produce an off-axis paraboloid. Now, a telescope, a reflecting telescope, is in the shape of a paraboloid, whatever that is. It's some well-defined shape. That's fine. People who are opticians know how to make a paraboloid with polishing and various other things. That was well understood. But nobody knew how to make an off-axis piece of a paraboloid. What Jerry came up with in his stress mirror polishing was a way to do that. He found that if you appropriately stressed a piece of glass, and then you polished it into a sphere, and then you unstressed it, it would pop into an off-axis paraboloid. So that was his great idea. People thought he was crazy, that it was just a nutty idea.

I had a small role in this whole story. I'd been hearing so many stories about this crazy Jerry Nelson guy. I was always in charge of colloquia, bringing in speakers. For some reason, year after year, I got put into colloquia. So I called him up one day and I asked him if he'd come down and give a talk on stress mirror polishing. So he agreed, and he came down. It was almost awkward because as I recall, when he showed up on campus, I couldn't get anyone to go to lunch with him. Usually we would take the colloquium speaker to lunch but nobody wanted to go to lunch with him, whatever the reason was. So I ended up taking him alone to lunch, which was kind of weird because I'm a theorist. I don't know beans about telescopes. But it turned out, he was a very well-read guy. He read the journals. He was very interested in the astronomy. We had a bunch of stuff to talk about. I was struck by how smart and intelligent he was. It was clear from the lunch this was no crazy guy. This was one smart, analytical guy, who was really good at analyzing things.

Then he gave his talk. His talk was a tour de force. It was beautiful. It was marvelous. It was persuasive. He certainly persuaded me, but what do I know? But I remember walking out of it, I walked down the hall with Joe Miller. I asked Joe what he thought. Joe said he was really impressed; this was a much better idea than he thought and that this might be workable. I was impressed that Joe would say that because Joe Miller was good friends with Joe Wampler, so for him to say that really did say a lot.

Well then, a few weeks later, it seemed to me fair, I asked Joe Wampler to give a talk. Joe gave a talk. Joe was a really good scientist, but his talk was not as impressive as Jerry's, in terms of the idea and how it could be developed.

Well lo and behold, it was then decided that this was such a great success having these two give talks, that the Joe and Jerry show went on the road. They gave talks on every one

of the UC campuses. Then people realized that before we're going to build this thing, we have to make a decision. The question was, how to make the decision? The folks at UC Berkeley, led by Charlie Townes, the Nobel Prize winner in physics, were convinced that the Nelson idea really made complete sense from the physicist's perspective. It was elegant; it was clean. It was great technology. The Berkeley folks were absolutely convinced Jerry Nelson's way was right.

The folks at UCLA thought this was nuts. They were absolutely convinced that the only way to go forward was Joe Wampler's way. At least on the surface, the Santa Cruz folks seemed to agree with UCLA. Remember, Wampler was a faculty member here. So finally it was decided, I don't know who decided this, but it was decided that the decision would be made by a committee of seven people who became known among us as the Gray Beards Committee. It was two senior people from Berkeley, two senior people from Santa Cruz, two senior people from UCLA and one senior person from San Diego. They met with Wampler. They met with Nelson. They did whatever they did in terms of background. Then they voted. They voted four to three for Jerry Nelson's idea. That left some consternation. The two from Berkeley, of course, voted for Jerry, and Margaret Burbidge, who was the person from San Diego, voted with Jerry.

Reti: So not everybody had a gray beard. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Right. True. The two from UCLA, of course, voted for Wampler. I'm not sure who the two people were from Santa Cruz. It might have been Osterbrock and Kraft, but I'm not sure. One of them voted for Wampler's idea, but one of them voted for Jerry Nelson's, and that was Bob Kraft. He cast the deciding vote, and for many people, the surprising deciding vote for Jerry Nelson's design. I think that there were people at UCLA

who never forgave Bob for doing that. I believe Bob did this because he thought it was the right thing to do.

Reti: I assume it worked in the end.

Blumenthal: It worked. From today's perspective, I think it worked better than a monolith could ever have worked. A monolith is also much more risky because it's a thin mirror. You crack the mirror, it's gone. If you break a segment, you just replace a segment.

But in fairness to the skeptics, and I think Jerry would even have agreed, there were some problems with the stress mirror polishing, particularly after they sawed off the ears to make it into a hexagon. In fact, what saved them was a new technology that came in place just in the nick of time, called heavy ion polishing, where basically they take a beam of heavy ions and they point it at a piece of glass. You can use the ions to take away one layer of atoms at a time. Because think about how the opticians traditionally polished mirrors or pieces of glass—they did it with some kind of rag of some sort with a circular motion. If you want to take off a little piece of atoms here in your circular motion, that means you have to take the atoms off elsewhere as well. It's really difficult to polish a mirror to that level of accuracy using traditional methods. It's possible, but it's very, very difficult. But the ion polishing just wiped them off the map because the ions could take off one layer of atoms at a time anywhere you wanted. That technology came in just as they were doing the mirrors. So that's how we ended up with segmented mirrors for the Keck telescope.

But, of course, then there was the minor difficulty of finding 100 million dollars to fund it. (Reti laughs) This was a UC project. The original idea was to just make this a UC facility. Almost by chance, we got a donor. This was very dramatic, actually. There was a guy in San Jose who's an amateur astronomer. I forget his name now. Joe Miller would certainly remember him well. He was very friendly to astronomy. And one day he wrote to the

people at Lick saying, you know, “My sister,” I think it was his sister, “is very wealthy and she’s looking for something to do with her money. She might be interested in this astronomy project, so you ought to contact her.”

It turns out her name was Hoffman and her husband was the sole importer of Ferraris in the United States. He had passed away already and she was sitting on 37 million dollars. To make a long story short, she agreed to give that money to the university to create the Hoffman Observatory. So everybody was happy.

But the story I heard—I don’t know if it’s true—I heard her representation was not very good. She literally went into the phone book in Miami under lawyers and picked a name and said, “I have 37 million dollars I’m trying to bequest. Do you work in this part of the law?” That’s what somebody told me. I have no idea whether that’s true. Anyway, to make a long story short, they worked out a deal with her. There was an agreement to do this. The president of the university, David Gardner, flew out to Miami. They signed an agreement. There’s a big picture of him with Mrs. Hoffman right after they signed the agreement, smiling, holding up the agreement. Then he flew back to Oakland. And the next day she died suddenly. Her estate did establish a foundation to fund this project, so it was in place, in a way. But the way it was set up was, as I understand it, there were two trustees. One was her long-time secretary and one was her sister, or maybe her daughter. I don’t know. A relative. The two trustees disagreed. The trustee who was her assistant wanted to give all the money to UC for the telescope and be done with it, and the other one didn’t. The long and the short of it was that the deal fell through and we never got any of the money from the Hoffman estate. That left us high and dry.

Then Caltech came in and said they had hundred million dollars burning a hole in their pockets. (laughter) No, the Keck Foundation agreed to give Caltech a hundred million

dollars. So a deal was forged between UC and Caltech that Caltech would supply the hundred million to build the telescope, which was about what it was going to cost, and UC would agree to pay operating expenses until spring of 2018, at which time the operating expenses would have been equal to the investment from Caltech. After which both sides would contribute equally to the operating expenses. And that's what happened.

It was complicated a little later when we got some more money from Keck to build the second telescope. That also had NASA partnership as well. But basically that was the agreement that stayed in place. And we're now past spring of 2018, so now Caltech and UC share equally. I was part of negotiating a new agreement last spring and getting the regents to approve it.

Reti: Well, thank you for explaining all that. I didn't realize all the history behind the Keck Telescope.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So that's how it all came about. It was, at the end of the day, a great success. One other quick story there, just for your own interest—and I heard this one from Joe Miller, because I wasn't there—but he said the dedication of the Keck telescope was really interesting because everyone went up to the top of the mountain. It's 14,000 feet. He said that David Gardner spoke, and read his speech from his notes, and it was all well and good. Then the president of Caltech, whoever it was at the time, gave an extemporaneous speech and it made absolutely no sense. And then the Hawaiian shaman gave the dedication prayer. That was the event. It turned out that the next day when the workers came up to start work, none of them would do the work because the shaman had given the wrong prayer, so they had to go find another shaman to come back up to give the right prayer so they could actually begin their work. 14,000 feet is non-trivial, which I can attest to from being up there several times.

I have a little bit more to say about Bob. In my early years here, I thought Bob was really supportive of me and of other junior faculty. I wanted to explicitly acknowledge that. Sometimes he could be funny, but overall, he was very, very supportive.

For example, soon after I arrived, I was asked to write an annual review article of x-ray stars. That was an area that he was interested in. So I struggled and did a draft. I sent it to him for comments. I was really nervous. I had no idea what he would say or what the reaction was and I had no great confidence that I had done a particularly good job. But he was very complimentary and very nice in his response. That gave me tremendous confidence. I was so grateful for that.

In Sandy Faber's case, soon after she arrived as a new assistant professor, she got pregnant.⁸⁶ She told me that she went to see him because he was then the acting director of the observatory, and I think probably also department chair, and told him that she was pregnant. I don't think there were maternity leave policies in those days. She said Bob said to her, "Look, Sandy. Do what you need to do. Stay home. Take care of your kid. Do whatever you think is right and do whatever you need. I will support you."

Reti: Wow. That's amazing.

Blumenthal: What more could you ask?

Reti: And an incredible impact that had. We might not have Sandy Faber here today if it wasn't for that.

Blumenthal: That's right. Exactly. It was just unqualified support. For Sandy, that was very, very meaningful. In those days I think her husband may have been in his last year of law school, so it wasn't like they had a lot of money. Some problems you can solve with money, but I'm not sure they had a lot, at least then. So he was really good about that.

He could be funny sometimes. I remember one time not long after I arrived, he took all of the assistant professors out to lunch and at lunch he had this long introduction, which made it sound like we were all about to get fired or something. I didn't know what was coming, but it wasn't good. Then the bottom line was we were all going to have to join colleges.

Reti: Oh. And you already had.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: So you didn't have a problem.

Blumenthal: I didn't have a problem with it. But it was just so—it was like the portent of doom.

Reti: Not realizing what impact your words might have on assistant professors.

Blumenthal: Exactly, especially in a department like ours. Because remember, people just didn't get tenure easily in that department then. The people who left were almost more eminent than the people who stayed. There was just no assurances whatsoever. So anyway, that was Bob Kraft. I still admire him and respect him and am grateful to him.

Reti: What about Gary Griggs?

Blumenthal: Gary Griggs.⁸⁷ I knew him slightly, but I really didn't know him well until he was appointed the director of the marine sciences campus program. He did such a fantastic job in building that up over all these years. I couldn't imagine somebody connecting better with the faculty, with the community, with the university. Gary did a phenomenal job for, I don't know, how many years, twenty-five, thirty years, whatever it was. He was a tremendous difference maker. Over the years I got to know him better and

better. He's one of the few people who've been on this campus who are still active who have been here longer than I have. I think he came in '68 or '69.

Matt Sands. Interesting character. We talked a bit about him earlier, the fact that Matt was very much into Kresge College, so people just didn't trust him that he would represent the sciences and hold back the scourge of the colleges. (Reti laughs) You know what I mean.

On the other hand, so far as I could tell, he pretty much acted responsibly in his role as dean. He didn't stay long. He left very soon after I arrived and went back to the faculty for a while. I think he was more respected outside of the sciences than he was respected inside the sciences. I always found it ironic that he certainly was the most famous physicist in the department by far.

He was unusual. I mean, I knew one graduate student who did some work with him after he came back to the physics department. And that graduate student, who was male, I might add, was nervous about the fact that Matt didn't have boundaries in terms of wanting the student and him to go out with women together, shall we say, and offering to set up the graduate student, which he was not comfortable with.

Nevertheless, Matt stayed in the department for a couple of years. Then he retired. As I said earlier, when he retired the department would not even offer him a desk or an office, which really shocked me, because at least in physics and astronomy, the emeriti stick around and get space, and they wouldn't give him space. Ultimately one of the groups within SCIPP, the Santa Cruz Institute of Particle Physics, gave him some space in one of their offices. And that came back in an interesting way many years later when Don Coyne gave him space. Don Coyne was a researcher in physics, but he was one of those people who I think held a faculty position somewhere else, maybe at Princeton. But he decided

he didn't want to be a ladder rank faculty member, so he became an adjunct here and a researcher and he supported himself through his grants. He had lots of grants and he was a major player within SCIPP, even if he wasn't a ladder faculty member. So he gave Matt some room after Matt retired. The chair of physics at the time was Mike Nauenberg. I think Mike had no patience with Matt.

The great irony is that many, many years later— his is a story I'll tell you in much more detail another time, when physics and astronomy were in Kerr Hall and decided, after the earthquake, that we didn't want to move out of Kerr Hall, a point was reached at which there had to be some rearrangement of physics and astronomy, even while we were still here. I was chair of astronomy at the time and we agreed we would each appoint a space person to negotiate what would happen going forward. I appointed Doug Lin. I don't know if you know Doug Lin but Doug Lin is not somebody you ever want to play poker with. He basically, he took them to the cleaners (laughter) which I kind of knew he would. One of the implications was that Mike Nauenberg was forced to move out of Kerr Hall and move back to Nat Sci II. Mike complained a lot at the top of his lungs until the person I was just speaking of said, "Don't complain to me, because I remember what you did to Matt Sands." I was so impressed at the time when I heard that story, because I thought I was maybe the only one who remembered what had happened. As you can tell, I'm like an elephant. I remember a lot of stuff.

Reti: Yeah, you do. It's amazing.

Blumenthal: So yeah, that was interesting. But anyway, Matt retired, and was a figure around town for many, many years. I always enjoyed running into him. He only passed away a few years ago, if I recall. He must have been well into his nineties.

Another interesting figure from those days, at least in physics, was Dave Dorfan.⁸⁸ Dave was here when I arrived. Dave was always one of the most interesting people in physics because although yes, he was a part of the particle physics group, he always went his own way and did his own thing. He was a remarkably interesting guy. He was also the coach for many years of the rugby team on campus. An interesting background, South African, but born, I think, in Jerusalem. Anyway, Dave was somebody who I had great admiration for, still have great admiration for. Really smart. Dave and I at one point talked about writing a book together, which would have been interesting, because I'm the theorist and he's very much the experimental type. Neither of us ever had the time to do it, but we did talk about it. And Dave served, I think, a couple of years as the dean of natural sciences. In fact, Dave, I think, was the dean when I got tenure. He was the person who informed me that division was forwarding my file for tenure early.

Okay. Who else? A few other names. Gregory Bateson.⁸⁹ I didn't know Gregory Bateson personally. His name is an interesting one to me. I paid attention to Bateson, particularly in 1978, because by then he had retired. He had met Jerry Brown at some Buddhist retreat and Jerry Brown had appointed him to the Board of Regents. I thought it was interesting that a former Santa Cruz faculty member was on the UC Board of Regents. Normally, that wouldn't have caused me a whole lot of attention, because I really wasn't paying attention to politics at the time. Except for the Angela Davis rule. Do you remember that?

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: So in the early '70s, UCLA hired this newly minted PhD, Angela Davis, to their faculty as an assistant professor.⁹⁰ When that happened, the Board of Regents was incensed, and angry. What the Board of Regents did is they removed the delegation from the chancellors to decide tenure cases. Prior to then, the decision of who gets tenure and

who didn't rested solely with the chancellors. And basically, they removed that delegation and brought it back to the Board of Regents, for the obvious reason that they wanted control over whether Angela Davis got tenure.

I think UCLA made life hard for her and she ultimately left. But what became known as the Angela Davis rule remained in effect. All tenure cases had to go to the Board of Regents. So the year that Sandy Faber and I came up for tenure, I can't speak for Sandy, but I was informed at a certain point, I think by Dave Dorfan, that my case had been approved by the campus, but that I didn't have tenure yet because the case had to go to the Board of Regents, which would take several more months.

A few months later, it was approved, and I duly got a letter in the mail promoting me to associate professor. Sandy did, too. It was all done. So I was interested in the Angela Davis rule, not only because I knew Angela, but because this delayed my tenure and it seemed like a really crazy thing.

The year after I got tenure, the regents took up the issue of repealing the Angela Davis rule, which they did. But one of the dissenting votes was Gregory Bateson. I didn't really follow statewide or systemwide politics in those days, but I was aware of his vote, and I was really pissed off by it because it struck me, how could a faculty member, or a former faculty member—

Reti: Did you ever learn why he opposed it?

Blumenthal: No. never did. But I do know that almost every time that I've talked to Jerry Brown, knowing that I'm from Santa Cruz, he mentions Gregory Bateson. The first time I met Jerry Brown he told me he was going to get him, by hook or by crook, into the California Hall of Fame. The next time I saw Jerry Brown he told me he had gotten Gregory Bateson into the California Hall of Fame. He really liked Gregory Bateson.

For a while in the late 70s, at the urging of Herman Blake, I chaired the campus affirmative action committee, which included in its membership the very famous biologist Robert Trivers. One big challenge for me was that, because I chaired this committee, I was on a systemwide committee, which I hated being on. It was the only time I ever was at University Hall, which was the precursor to UCOP. I had to go up there for a few meetings and the reason they had these meetings is they were preparing some report on affirmative action for the legislature. It was like a hundred-page report, right? I read the report. All the report basically said, if you really looked at it carefully, was our numbers of minority students here are not changing as a percentage and they're pretty much the same as they've always been. That's one sentence that could accurately describe a hundred-page report.

Reti: A hundred pages! (laughs)

Blumenthal: Instead, it was a hundred pages of BS. It just went on and on and on. I kind of called them out on that (laughs) and I didn't get reappointed to the position, which I was very, very grateful for. (laughter)

What can I say about Mike Nauenberg? First of all, [I think I already mentioned that] when I first arrived on campus, my office was on the third floor of Nat Sci II. The room next to mine was a conference room, which was fine, except that I was in my office on a Saturday and physics decided to have a physics board meeting on a Saturday. The fighting and the shouting was so loud I had to leave. This had to be in around '73 or '74. Mike was one of the main players in the shouting. Mike has never been a quiet, soft-spoken individual. After that, they converted that conference room into three offices and Mike got placed in the office next to me. So for, I don't know, twenty years, Mike and I were next to each other. Mike was a senior faculty member; I was a very junior faculty member.

But not a day seemed to go by when Mike wouldn't storm into my office with his latest outrage. (laughs) He always had something that he was outraged about. Sometimes he was completely off-base, but I have to say, probably more often than not, he was right. But even when he was right, it usually didn't deserve the level of moral outrage that— I also have to say, I enjoyed some of my interactions with Mike. I did learn a lot from him about the university. Mike was never reticent about telling you what he thought. You wouldn't believe the range of things that Mike would storm into my office talking about.

But in many ways, he was a good physicist. He knew a lot of physics. He asked good questions. He was always skeptical. I give him a lot of credit for that. Sometimes Mike lacked credibility with the upper administration. For example, at a certain point, when Frank Drake was the dean of sciences, Mike got it into his head—and in fairness to Mike, I don't think it originated with him. I think some other people brought in the idea and he was skeptical, at first, but then brought in wholeheartedly—that we had to bring to campus a physicist who works on string theory Tom Banks. Tom Banks was this great physicist.

So he went to Drake with this seemingly great idea. Drake was remarkably skeptical of the idea. Ultimately, what pushed it over the top was that both Sandy Faber and I independently went to Drake and told him that even though Tom didn't really work in our areas per se, we were aware of his work and we thought he would be a great addition to the campus. Drake listened, and ultimately Tom was appointed to the faculty. It was a good appointment, but Mike couldn't have pulled it off on his own.

I think it was when [Karl Pister] became chancellor. After about a year or so, Pister did some things that really ticked off some of the science chairs. The science chairs wanted to have a meeting. We were meeting with Dave Kliger and the other chairs. Kliger said, "Mike

if you want to have a meeting, that's fine with me. I have to be there, but I shouldn't be the initiator, and it's fine to ask."

So Mike volunteered to contact the chancellor and arrange a meeting with the chairs. And he did. Pister's response was, "No, I can't go and meet with the chairs of science, Then I'd have to meet with the chairs of every division. I don't think that this is important. And so the answer to your question, Mike, is no."

When the chairs heard about this from Mike, we were all kind of annoyed. It turned out there had been a demonstration at McHenry by some students. Pister had come out and talked to those students. So we kind of said well maybe what we need to do is have a demonstration.

Reti: (laughs) That's cute.

Blumenthal: So that was the tenor of the discussion among the chairs. So I called Julia Armstrong, who was then, I think, the assistant to the chancellor or chief of staff. I know her pretty well. So I chatted with Julia, and I told Julia what the tenor of the feelings were over within the division. I said, "I really would urge you to ask him to reconsider the decision to not meet with us."

And lo and behold, that same afternoon, Mike Nauenberg comes into my office and he says, "I can't believe it. They changed their mind at the chancellor's office. They're going to have a meeting with us." Of course, I never told him my role in this.

But in any event, we ended up having the meeting and all was well.

I will tell you a funny story. As I said, our offices were next to each other in Nat Sci II. We were in the middle of the building, and for some reason, there was a water leak. The water always leaked into our two offices.

Reti: No! (laughs)

Blumenthal: So for literally years and years and years, whenever there was a heavy storm, I'd come in and there'd be an inch of water on the floor of my office. The same with Mike. Nobody else was affected in the same way.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was really annoying. Really annoying. We kept calling facilities people, and they kept coming out and doing stuff, and nothing happened. Then they put on a new roof on Nat Sci II. That didn't fix it, either. It was so frustrating that this happened time after time after time.

Well, one day after this had been going on for years, there was a big storm. We got flooded. They called in the people with the vacuums to vacuum up the water. They called someone from facilities who came over. Mike and I were talking with the guy from facilities and I asked the question, "Well, did you ever go up to the roof and drop some dye around the roof, different colored dyes, to see where the leak is coming from?"

Facilities said, "Oh, we never thought of that. That's a really good idea."

I said, "So why don't you do it?"

He said, "I can't." He said, "We can't do it. We'd need to get permission from the campus architect, and then we'd need to get permission from this other group." He said, "We can pursue that road, but it's going to take a while to get the appropriate permissions to do that."

Mike was furious after that conversation, so he went over to the biology department and he got some dyes (Reti laughs) and he came back. It's pouring out and he said to me, "Come on, George. We're going to figure this out."

I said, "Are you sure this is a good idea?"

So we went up to the fourth floor and went into Sandy Faber's office. She was above us. She wasn't there. We went into Sandy Faber's office. He opened the window and he said, "I'm going to climb out on the roof and put these dyes." He said, "All you've got to do, George—"

I said, "Mike, this is not a good idea. Stop."

Reti: Don't kill yourself. (laughs)

Blumenthal: He said, "All you've got to do is hold onto my belt."

Reti: Oh my God! (laughter)

Blumenthal: So he climbs out there and I'm holding onto his belt. Out there, there's one of these, I forget what you call it, but it's like the extension of the wall outside. So it's still a wall, even though you're now outside on the roof. It had big access thing you could go into because they'd been trying for so long to fix our leak, they'd done some access stuff through there.

So he put in dye all around it. We rushed down to the third floor and looked around, and kept waiting and waiting and waiting. Nothing came through with color. Nothing! We were just kind of shocked that nothing came through with color, but it didn't.

So I went home. The next morning I come in and I see Mike in the hall. He said to me, “You know, they spent last year forty thousand dollars to bring in consultants on this leak, which they didn’t fix.”

I said, “Yeah, I heard that.”

He said, “Well, they ought to pay us forty thousand dollars because I have fixed the leak.”

I said, “What are you talking about, Mike?”

He said, “This morning I was so confused thinking about the failure of our experiment yesterday, I went back up there and I realized something. All of the work that they had done on the wall between our offices, they had missed it by one. It was really one office over. So they were looking in the wrong place for all these years. If you look in the right place, the leak was obvious.”

Reti: Oh, gosh.

Blumenthal: So I said, “So it can be fixed?”

He said, “Not only can it be fixed, I called facilities and they came out and they’ve already fixed it.”

Reti: Wow. So some of that drive paid off.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Some of that drive paid off.

But anyway, that’s Mike Nauenberg in a nutshell.

Harry Beevers, I knew a little bit.⁹¹ I didn’t know him well. I know he was well respected by everyone who met him and who knew him. He commanded a great deal of respect. But I didn’t interact with him very much at all, except once, and this was during Sinsheimer’s

years. I was at home one day. Harry called me and said there was going to be a gathering at Sinsheimer's house that night and he wanted me to be there to represent astronomy. I later found out—I think, I either found out or I guessed—that he had called Bob Kraft and that Kraft had recommended that I do this. But I was so surprised to get a call out of the blue from Harry Beevers. The issue at hand was Sinsheimer's idea of a research park on campus. One of Sinsheimer's big problems, which is still a problem today, was the lack of money on campus to fund operations. So Sinsheimer was thinking well, okay, we need more money, how do we get more money? Well, maybe one way of getting more money is to use one of our biggest resources, which is land. We have lots of land on campus, so maybe we should put aside some land, sort of like Stanford did, and have a research park on the campus. We'd have companies come in. They would also employ our students. They'd interact with our faculty. We would get a double benefit. We'd get the benefit of the revenue of our land.

That was Sinsheimer's big idea. As you might imagine, it was not the most popular idea on our campus. I think we discussed it within my department at one point. I was one of the dissenters. I thought it was a bad idea at the time.

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: Number one, I wasn't all that anxious to get involved with the industrial complex of the country. And number two, I didn't think that the infrastructure of the campus could withstand it. We have only one road going up to campus. Third, there's only one school nearby, Westlake, and I didn't think they could handle a huge influx of more students. So I just didn't think it was a good idea. I told that to Harry Berger when he called and invited me. I said, "You may not want me to be the one that represents my department because probably if you took a vote, it would be 60/40 the other way."

He said, “That’s okay. It didn’t matter.” He wanted a diversity of opinions for Sinsheimer to hear.

So I said fine and went to this thing. It was a very good meeting that Harry had orchestrated. There was a wide diversity of opinions. I was hardly the most outspoken person there. I was still pretty shy in those days, but I did make one really solid point. I said to him, “Look, you promised at the beginning that you would bring this to a vote of the faculty, and you would abide by a vote of the faculty. So let’s leave aside all of the issues of the merits. It is my impression that right now you would get about 50 percent of the vote in the science division and you’d get about 3 percent of the vote in humanities and social sciences and arts. I don’t see how you have a pathway to getting this approved by the faculty. And since you’ve committed to seeking that approval, it seems to me that this is DOA.”

He took it seriously. He wasn’t ready to give up, but he said we need to be more specific about what it would mean, what it would look like, and then maybe people will support it. But after that, his efforts were much more half-hearted. I think he saw the handwriting on the wall. I think that was Harry’s point. That’s the whole reason Harry did this.

Recollections of

Chancellor Sinsheimer’s Reorganization of the College System

Reti: Very interesting. Is this a place where we could talk a little bit about reorganization, since you brought up Sinsheimer’s issues and challenges.

Blumenthal: Well, I’ll come back and talk about Christensen and Sinsheimer— But the discussion of reorganization or reaggregation of the campus—do you mean the same by it?

Reti: No. Reaggregation happened first, the recluster of faculty.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: And then, reorganization was affected the entire structure of the college system.

Blumenthal: Okay. Fair enough. I see them as connected. At least in my mind, they were kind of connected. Because once you did reaggregation, that intrinsically made the colleges lose some of their intrinsic features. Once you did reaggregation, it seemed to me reorganization was almost an obvious outgrowth. That's from my perspective. That's why, for me, it's hard to separate.

Reti: Well, you don't need to separate them.

Blumenthal: So when I first got here, at the very first, there was almost no discussion of reorganization. We were starting new colleges. McHenry was still chancellor and I think McHenry would never have supported either reaggregation or reorganization. But by the time McHenry stepped down and Christensen came in, there were already discussions, particularly around reaggregation, but also around reorganization, because the stresses were being felt. There were stresses in departments whose faculty were widely separated on campus, and some of the implications of those stresses were obvious. It was difficult for them to have meetings. Even if they did meet regularly, there were no casual interactions. You didn't meet around the water cooler or coffee pot. And I think in many departments, particularly in the social sciences and humanities, it was difficult to do collaborative work. So there were lots of reasons why people were starting to think of reaggregation as being important. Those discussions were starting as McHenry was ending and Christensen was coming in.

But there was also an undercurrent of some of the things about reorganization and the role of the colleges and the boards or the departments. From where I sat, the system wasn't working because we were seeing disagreements that weren't getting resolved. I believe that in the early days of the campus, from say '65 to '70 or '71, there were probably disagreements, but McHenry ruled with an iron hand and he resolved disagreements, so decisions got made.

By the time I was on board, decisions weren't getting made and resolutions weren't happening. And those disagreements were taking place in both hiring and tenuring. I was hardly an expert on organizational dynamics, but it was clear this was not sustainable. I knew something had to happen. Either we had to reaffirm our commitment to the original vision and not change anything, or we had to make a significant number of changes.

From the conversations I heard in the senate, just in the halls, etcetera, I was skeptical that there would be significant change. I thought that campus would never accept either reaggregation or reorganization. But again, I thought reaggregation would inevitably lead to reorganization. I never saw them as separate, even if others did. I know that it was a very divisive issue. I was an assistant professor and very shy, reserved, and careful. I never spoke loudly about the topic, because I didn't want to be classified as an ideologue on either side of the coin, even though I held opinions. I was an assistant professor and I was afraid that this was such a political place that I didn't want to be identified with one or the other point of view.

So maybe I misread things a little bit in terms of the intensity because I was surprised, when Christensen was chancellor, that the movement toward both reaggregation and reorganization seemed to be gathering some intensity. What was noticeable was the lack of leadership by Christensen, by the chancellor. In a way, looking back on it, that was

Christensen's biggest flaw. I know others felt that his flaws had to do with style, or with bad personnel decisions, which he did make some of. But from where I was sitting, the biggest issue was the lack of leadership on an issue that was at the forefront. I think that had he exerted strong leadership, not only would that have saved his chancellorship, but it probably would have set the course for the campus for years to come. But he didn't.

As I mentioned earlier, there was this one Academic Senate meeting near the end of his tenure where he kind of defended himself. He was still trying to hang on. And basically, he threw it back at the senate and said he was looking for leadership from the Academic Senate on this issue of such great importance to the campus. He was hoping to be told by the senate what the faculty wanted to do and then he was prepared to do it. At one level, I can understand that, but the organization of the campus is something that at some level I felt that the chancellor needed to be—I interpreted Christensen's speech very negatively, as an excuse and at very best, just weak leadership. Again, that was me. I might not even have been able to say those words quite as well as I just said it but that was certainly the feeling that I had. I think I understood it, even if I might not have been able to express it.

But things kind of got placed on hold, because Christensen, at a certain point, was then on his way out. And he was out.

I don't remember the exact sequence of events. I think once Christensen left, then some reaggregation started to occur, probably under Angus Taylor. I didn't pay that close of attention because Oakes wasn't included that much in the reaggregation, a little bit, but not all that much. So it wasn't a huge issue for that particular college yet. But it was taking place, and it was the kind of thing that Angus would support. There may well have been a lot of discussion about it, but I wasn't a party to it. It wasn't discussed in the senate; it wasn't discussed in my department. I suspect, to the extent that there was a lot of

discussion about it, it was discussed extensively in certain departments that were intending, or wishing to reaggregate, and maybe in some of the colleges that were being identified as recipients of reaggregated faculties. I think that by the time Angus Taylor's year, year and a half ended, a significant amount of reaggregation had already taken place, particularly in the social sciences.

Then Sinsheimer came in. Sinsheimer didn't take long to realize that this was not stable. So Sinsheimer immediately proposed what you would call reorganization, that is a realignment of the roles of the colleges and the departments or boards. They were still called boards in those days. He laid a stake in the ground that he thought we needed to reorganize, that we needed to complete reorganization. And he set up a committee to implement it. I think the committee may have been chaired by George Gaspari in physics. He either chaired it or was on it. He was a big player in it, I know. And as near as I can tell, the committee did a good job. It was efficient and effective.

That did affect Oakes College because we're now seeing that teaching two courses in Oakes was not going to be a welcome strategy anymore. I talked to Herman about it. I said that I wanted to stay in the college. I was still committed to the college and I would give it some energy, but I wasn't prepared to continue to teach in the college, and if that was unacceptable, he just needed to tell me that. I was at a point in my career where I needed to do that. I had just gotten tenure but I felt that to continue my development and my relationship with my department, I needed to devote more of my time to my department.

Herman was fine with that and there were no ill feelings. But reorganization had a devastating effect on Oakes College because there were far fewer courses that could be offered. I think that was ultimately the death knell of the science program. I don't think we knew it yet, because we kept it going for a number of years, both by getting some faculty

to teach in the science program and from some private money that Herman devoted toward keeping the program going. He hired a lecturer, somebody in chemistry who also did some lecturing at Oakes. So we kept it going for a while. But in a sense, it was an unsustainable thing to do under those circumstances within the campus.

Reorganization took place relatively quickly. At a certain point, the colleges lost the power to influence hiring and tenure decisions. I think that it still was the case that the colleges could express an opinion, and that the opinion needed to be heard, but they didn't wield the kind of equal power that had been the case before.

In a way, thinking back on it, that's kind of sad because Santa Cruz had adopted a very different kind of model for the organization of academia. It was a model that worked remarkably well during the first years of the campus. Nobody would say anything different. Some marvelous things happened here. Looking at it with the hindsight of history, I think that the model was not sustainable in a state university facing funding cuts on a regular, ongoing basis. It was simply not going to be sustainable because the colleges as academic units were not the most efficient way of spending your money for academia. I'm not sure if people knew that yet at the time, that we were going to face quite this long a road of decline.

Reti: Because of the expense of the colleges?

Blumenthal: Yes. Anytime you do duplication, there's expense. When you offer college courses, you aren't necessarily optimizing your teaching resources. A department, presumably, when they offer an offering do an optimization, but when somebody teaches between two units, their time isn't necessarily optimized.

Also, there was an advising issue. College advising was done by faculty in those days. I was appalled by college advising and I was appalled by my own college advising because

I didn't know enough to really be a good advisor and I really felt badly. I would often tell students—the main advice I would give them would be to go talk to somebody who knew something, not me. I also kept insisting at Oakes—and they were pretty good about it—that they give me some science students to advise. The first year, they gave me people from art, from history. I mean, it was crazy. What do I know? I could advise them about general education but I think that part of advising is the long-term advising of thinking about a pathway to complete your degree.

Eventually Oakes did something really good. Again, I give Herman credit. We did an Oakes advising fair where we would do all of the Oakes advising in the Learning Center and all of the faculty would be there at the same time. So you could just send somebody over to the table over there to talk to the historian. That worked better than the old system, but it was still a little bit chaotic. And you can't do all your advising in one day. That just isn't going to work. I think we did as good a job as could have been done under those circumstances. I might also add that advising has been an issue over decades for this campus. I think we're in better shape today than maybe ever before, in terms of advising of frosh and sophomores, but it's taken a long time to get to where we are now. I don't even think we're optimal yet. But it certainly wasn't optimal to have faculty who knew nothing do this advising.

Reti: So there were no staff college advisors at that time. Because later on we had staff people who were hired.

Blumenthal: Yes, that happened later, at least at Oakes.

Reti: Yeah. And I don't know if it's possible to remember back, but were you disappointed at reorganization, or in support of it?

Blumenthal: I was disappointed that we had to do it, because I thought the campus had been successful in the old model. But I supported it because I also thought that it wasn't working. I saw the not-working part of it. It was very distressing.

I might add that I think the campus, as is often the case, overreacted to reorganization. For so many years, the colleges lost a lot of their role. Really, it's only been in recent years that that colleges have again thought about some of the academic things beyond the core course.

Reti: So, jumping back to Sinsheimer, were there other things you wanted to say about his chancellorship?

Blumenthal: I had huge admiration for Sinsheimer, a huge, huge admiration. Stepping back for a minute, when Angus Taylor came in, his coming in was a moment of rationality. Taylor was a rational guy. Angus Taylor brought us back down to earth and made us realize that we can't just keep going down the pathway of craziness. We needed to be solid and rational. Sinsheimer, of course, was the ultimate rational guy.

Reti: (laughs) True.

Blumenthal: And he was very close to David Saxon. I don't know if they were friends, but he did tell me later that Saxon really twisted his arm to take on the chancellorship. For him, the model of the university was Caltech. Of course, we're not Caltech and shouldn't be Caltech, but having a little dose of Caltech into the Santa Cruz experience was not a bad thing. It brought a level of academic rigor.

Sinsheimer, by bringing in the people in admissions he did, by raising the level of respect for the campus which he did just by his presence, helped turn around this narrative that Santa Cruz's applications were falling so far that we should be considering closing the

campus. That discussion took place during Sinsheimer's time. The rumor mill was that they were going to close the campus. We were having trouble filling our classes. We were taking Berkeley redirects, who we were then guaranteeing the right to transfer back to Berkeley in two years. We were having trouble getting our entering class full, even with the Berkeley redirects. This was the 1970s. Everyone wanted to go to medical school and they were afraid the narrative evaluations and the crazy Santa Cruz experience would keep them out of med school. So there were lots and lots of challenges. But having a hard-nosed scientist from Caltech as chancellor eased that tension a little bit. Sinsheimer was also just ultimately rational. I'd go to the senate meetings to hear his updates. I used to joke that Sinsheimer was one guy you could fall asleep between words in his speeches. (Reti laughs) It was very slow. I don't know if you've listened to a Sinsheimer—

Reti: Oh, sure. And I remember him from when I was a student here.

Blumenthal: But still, he always had something to say. He deeply cared about the place and he deeply cared about scholarship. And he was an ethical man. Yes, he did reorganize the campus. He did it in a way that worked, and we emerged from this successfully. I think he brought a high level of respectability within the UC system. Because he was a man that deserved respect, his campus deserved that equally. Having a leader deserving of respect—that helps a lot.

I think ultimately that helped put to bed this discussion of potentially closing the Santa Cruz campus. I know it was serious enough that I actually followed the discussion that was taking place at a systemwide level. There was a big debate at the time about whether tenure was departmental, campuswide, or systemwide. President David Saxon was arguing that tenure resided within a department and certainly resided within a campus. This was a clear message that if that became the rule of the land and the Santa Cruz

campus closed, all of us who were tenured faculty were out on our ear. So, I did follow that discussion quite closely. At the end of the day, at a certain point before Saxon left office, he abandoned the question and said he wasn't going to rule on it and he was just going to let the matter sit without resolution.

Reti: I didn't realize it was that serious.

Blumenthal: No, I followed that quite closely and avidly.

Reti: You had reason to, for sure.

Blumenthal: I'm not sure it's ever been resolved in a formal way by the university.

Reti: This question of where tenure resides.

Blumenthal: Yes. So, he did that. Of course, he did his thing with the human genome, which we all know about. I was aware of it at the time because he had been writing articles. So not only was he somebody who was a chancellor, but I was also aware of some of the work he was doing. I'm not sure I fully appreciated it, but I certainly was aware of it.

He was also a man of some integrity. Prior to his arrival—I think during the Christensen time, or it might have been Angus Taylor, I don't remember—we had done an appointment of a young assistant professor named Steve Vogt. I was on the recruitment committee, because I remember having dinner with Steve when he visited campus. We hired him right out of graduate school, which was relatively rare in those days. But the reason we hired him was because it was clear that he was an instrumentalist par excellence, somebody who could really drive us into the 21st century, or toward the 21st century in terms of modern instrumentation. He had been working on something called reticons, which were the precursors to CCDs [Charge-coupled Device]. He was clearly

working on new things and exciting things, so it was sort of obvious that we should hire him.

We did. He was supposed to go into Lick Observatory in an 80 percent Lick, 20 percent departmental appointment, which was standard for the Lick faculty. But when the appointment was made, it was made as 100 percent Lick. That really ticked off Don Osterbrock, who was the director of Lick. So Don spent a year or two haranguing the administration about having made this appointment, and how it was inappropriate to make this special appointment for this assistant professor guy, when he should have been appointed just like everybody else.

When I became chair of astronomy, Don came to see me. He handed me this file about Steve Vogt and he said, "I've been fighting this for two years. I'm tired. I'm giving up. I'm turning this over to you and the department to go fight this battle."

I read through all of the papers. I didn't know what to do. Don was counting on me to do something, but I didn't know what I could do. I read through the papers and realized they Don had made a number of principled and substantive arguments, to no avail. Finally, I wrote a letter to Sinsheimer. In the letter I said, "Look, I know Don has talked to you about the merits of why it's appropriate to have Steve be an 80/20 appointment. I want to talk to you about the legality of his appointment. I pointed out to him that number one, advertising for one position and then hiring into another is a violation of affirmative action rules and university regulations. I also pointed out to him that as a member of the department, but as somebody who is not in Lick Observatory, I voted on his appointment, whereas if it had been a Lick appointment, I should not have been voting. I thought that was also a violation of university rules and regulations." I said, "I really do believe this is

the right thing to do, to make him an 80/20 appointment, just as Don has argued, but I'm arguing that it is also illegal not to make the appointment we advertised".

I got a quick note back from Sinsheimer saying, "Well, I will look into your allegations." Then about a month or two months later, I got a second letter from Sinsheimer saying, "Academic Human Resources has now looked into your allegations and concluded that you are right, so I'm changing his appointment to an 80/20 appointment."

I couldn't believe it! I just couldn't believe it. I didn't think I was going to win on this one. But I did. I think it was because Sinsheimer was determined to do the right thing. So that was one example.

He and his wife Karen did many things for the campus.⁹² He wasn't married at the time that he was appointed. This led to an event that was almost a huge embarrassment to me. So when Sinsheimer came here, at social events he was there with a woman who was a staff member on campus. I forget her name now, but she was a member of the staff. I knew her slightly because I used to go running on West Cliff Drive in the morning. Some mornings I would do a really early run, like five in the morning. I'd drop Kelly off somewhere and then go running. And there was this woman who was often running there. She was the staff person. She was Bob's partner, or accompanying person at these events.

And then one day I heard that he got married. The next day I'm out there running and I see her. We were passing each other going in opposite directions. I almost stopped to turn around and run with her to congratulate her on her marriage. I didn't (laughs) and I am so glad that I didn't because, of course, she's not the person he married. It was something of a cause célèbre at the time. I never made any assumptions about their relationship. I didn't know. I was always very naive about these things. But he married Karen, who he had a relationship with back in Santa Barbara. Of course, she turned out to be a wonderful

addition to the campus. She did all this great work with Shakespeare Santa Cruz. She was indeed a presence on campus.

Bob and Karen entertained in a way that I don't think any chancellor has since. There would be annual parties. One year Bob roasted a pig at University House, which I thought was kind of a strange thing to do. He enjoyed being chancellor and it came through. That also lent a spirit to the campus. I know that there were some people, and I even know some people today, who you almost can't mention Sinsheimer's name to because of reorganization, because of what he did to the colleges. But frankly, I think he had no choice. I view him as the savior of the campus. I rank chancellors by how did they leave the campus compared to how they found it when they arrived. And by any measure, Bob left the campus in much better shape than when he arrived. He did it ethically; he did it warmly. He was a man of principle.

I remember another issue that came up at the time had to do with one of the deans of physical and biological sciences, a guy named Ted Foster who was, I think, an earth scientist. He was appointed dean and—(laughs) Oh, this was funny. So Bob Kraft had been chair of astronomy and it was agreed that I would be the next chair. It was also agreed that I wouldn't become chair until January. The reason was, I was only an associate professor. I shouldn't have been chair, to be honest with you. I was only an associate professor, so I couldn't do the personnel files for the full professors. So Bob decided he would do all the personnel files in the fall and then I could take over as chair without being burdened by having to do personnel, which I greatly appreciated.

So I took over in January and I went to my first meeting of the chairs. It was really surreal because, of course, the chairs had been working together for a whole quarter. Basically, the meeting was largely theater, of the other chairs wanting to socialize me. It was all

about me. I mean, it wasn't explicitly, but that's how it felt to me. They were trying to socialize me to convince me that the dean was incompetent. I remember Ira Pohl, who was the chair of computer sciences, gave this long speech at the meeting. Sometimes people give long speeches and they say lots of stuff, but if you really cut through it all, what he was really saying was how terrible the dean was, and right in front of the dean.

Reti: Oh, the dean was there!

Blumenthal: The dean was there. That's ultimately what he was saying. It was a really strange meeting. The dean defended himself in a strange way, too. I don't remember what he said, but I was not persuaded. I was kind of taken aback that we were having all of this discussion about whether the dean was capable or not.

Well, it turned out that the chairs were getting ready to go to Sinsheimer and propose that Foster be removed as dean. I think the socialization of George Blumenthal wasn't about George Blumenthal; it's just, they wanted a united front and they wanted me to understand and they realized they couldn't do this overnight. After that first meeting, the first thing I did is I went back to my building. I went to see Bob Kraft and I said, "What the hell is going on with the dean?"

Reti: (laughs) God!

Blumenthal: Bob, in his inimical way, kind of smiled and said, "Yeah, there really have been some issues there, haven't there?"

I said, "You didn't warn me."

Anyway, we did go to see Sinsheimer. It was Charles Daniel who was in biology who organized that visit. Daniel was really smart, a savvy guy. Daniel told all of us that Sinsheimer was not going to remove somebody in the middle of the year as dean. That

just isn't the way he operated. He just wouldn't do it. But we needed to convince him not that terrible things were happening. We needed to convince him that failure to remove the dean would have long-term adverse impact on the division. I think Daniel was right.

So we met. I was relatively silent during the meeting, because I didn't have a basis to judge one way or the other. When Sinsheimer turned to me and said, "What do you think?" which kind of embarrassed me, all I could say was that it was clear to me as the newcomer to this group that the dean had lost the support of the people who were directly reporting to him.

Sinsheimer removed him, put in Ron Ruby on a temporary basis. I think Ron did it another year or so. I don't remember the details. But Ron did it for a brief period of time. It was probably the right decision, looking back on it. I should emphasize that Ted Foster was not an evil man. He was not a bad man. He was a good academic. He did good work. He was just not cut out to be dean. That's not a crime.

I really wanted to make sure that I said something about Sinsheimer's support for me after I became chancellor. I really appreciated that. Sinsheimer came up to campus once or twice a year. Kelly and I usually tried to meet with him and Karen. We often had dinner, or usually a picnic or something at University House, or a dinner at University House. Sometimes he had his children with him and we would make it a potluck of sorts. I always enjoyed meeting with Bob.

So the first year we did this, when I was acting chancellor, they came up and we did a picnic outside or something. The next year, I was appointed chancellor. Now I had access to University House living quarters. Well, when Denice Denton had become chancellor, she had basically repainted the living quarters at University House. They were all painted

a dark color. Black, almost. It was just unbelievably dark in there and depressing, except for one room, which was painted bright red. So I named it the Bordello Room. (laughter)

Reti: No! (laughs)

Blumenthal: Kelly, when she saw University House living quarters. basically said, “I can’t live here. This has to be repainted.”

The university said, “Well, wait a minute. There’s a two-year rule. You have to leave the paint in place for two years.”

Kelly said, “I am not going to live in that place.”

I’m not real invested in how things look. I mean, I can live anywhere. I won’t say I don’t care, because I do care, but I’m pretty stoical about these things. So the Sinsheimers visited that year. I knew Karen was the ultimate woman of taste. Karen’s sense of taste was always just so good in so many ways. Bob, of course, was a man of few words. I didn’t expect him to comment. But I asked them if they wanted to see the living quarters. They were enthusiastic and said yeah, they did. (Reti laughs)

So we brought them into the living quarters. I remember the first reaction that came from Karen was that she was just appalled. She said, “This is not livable. This is terrible.” It was real confirmation of Kelly’s viewpoint. So, we’re standing in the hallway kind of talking about this, and Bob goes wandering off, just looking around. All of a sudden, I hear from him a loud, “Oh my God!” He got to the Bordello Room. (laughter) So ultimately, what I did is I talked to the president and I said, “We need an exception to policy.” I said, “I’ve been married for thirty-two years and I want to make it to thirty-three,” or whatever the number of years was at the time.

Reti: Crazy. But you were getting to how supportive Bob was of you as chancellor?

Blumenthal: Yes. Bob would ask about issues. He was never critical. Even when we got rid of Shakespeare Santa Cruz (which we'll talk much more about later), which I think could have been a very divisive issue between the two of us, and certainly with Karen, that wasn't the case at all. I think they realized how hard I had fought to keep Shakespeare Santa Cruz. They were remarkably understanding, I have to say. I could have understood it if they had been angry or disappointed. But they never said anything like that.

Bob was supportive. We did talk about issues. And when you're the chancellor, not a lot of people around here are willing to tell you you're screwing up. Bob is somebody who I would have trusted to do that. Yet I found him supportive.

I just wanted to add one more story about when I was chair of the astronomy department the first time. At the time, I agreed soon after I became chair to put aside some department money—we didn't have much money, but I put aside some to buy the graduate students a fancy-dancy typewriter, one of the most fancy ones we could get because they had to type their dissertations, and I wanted to give that to them. So I agreed to do that. And then before we actually did it, the head of the graduate student group, Doug Duncan, came to me and said, "Don't do this. The campus now has a UNIX system. We can edit files on the UNIX system. Why not just buy us a big fancy printer that we can use to print files that we've edited on the campus system?"

So I said fine. We would do it. I wanted to do a little investigating. I'd never used UNIX the campus system that way. I did know UNIX, and I knew there was a campus UNIX system. So I started to investigate it, and realized you could connect via modem. In those days, you took a telephone handset, and you stuck it in the modem.

Reti: Yes. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I think 300 baud was the rate that you got at that time. Anyway, I investigated it and realized this was a great system. So I went to the dean, and I got the dean to agree to buy the department some computer terminals, so that any faculty member or student could use them to do work, to do email, to do whatever.

Reti: Right. So those were those dummy terminals. They didn't have a brain themselves, but they connected to the system.

Blumenthal: Absolutely dumb terminals, yes. Yeah, Teledyne or something terminals. So we did that, and I quickly realized that the idea that I would send out blue memos to the department all the time, as chairs typically did, that this was a time that should have passed. When I investigated it, I discovered most of the department had already started to use email. They had email accounts. The computer people at Lick had done that; De Clarke⁹³ and others had set up computer accounts for everybody and people were actually using them. So I realized that it would be much more efficient to just send people emails rather than write memos, have somebody type the memo, distribute it on paper. It would be much faster to do the email.

So I did that and then realized that there was a little bit of a problem because not all the faculty used email. The last holdout was John Faulkner, which was kind of funny, because John did stellar evolution, and he did major computer codes on stellar evolution, so he'd run some very sophisticated stellar evolution codes. So he was certainly computer literate, but he just didn't know email. I decided that I would sit down with John. I literally sat with John and taught him how to use the Lick email system. He learned it, so that way, I could feel comfortable sending out emails.

Reti: Great. Okay. Well, thank you, George. We'll continue next week.

Blumenthal: I will look forward to it.

More on Oakes College

Reti: Today is November 1, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I am here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our eighth oral history session together. And so, Chancellor, today we're going to start with a little backtrack to Oakes College.

Blumenthal: Yes, we had the naming of J. Herman Blake House a few days ago.⁹⁴ I told some stories in my remarks, but Herman added something that I had forgotten. He got up at the end and gave a few remarks. And when he got to me he mentioned that I had visited Daufuskie Island with him and Bill Doyle. But he said that he wanted to tell the audience something about me that was really important: I am probably the only astrophysicist in the world, he said, who knows how to squinch a squirrel (laughter) and I learned that on our trip down to the tabby huts at Daufuskie Island. And he's right. I remember we were walking back from the tabby huts and there was a relatively elderly man there. He had a fire, and he had a squirrel, and he was squinching the squirrel, which meant cleaning it and preparing it to cook so that he could eat the squirrel. So we watched him squinch the squirrel.

Reti: And did you get a hands-on demonstration?

Blumenthal: No, no hands-on demonstration. Oh, good lord. (laughter)

Reti: Okay. Well, that's great.

Blumenthal: But it's funny that he remembered that. That was a long time ago. But anyway, so shall we start with Stevens?

Reti: Yes. Sure.

Recollections of Chancellor Robert Stevens

Blumenthal: Okay. Robert Stevens.⁹⁵ Oh, my goodness. Stevens was appointed chancellor to replace Bob Sinsheimer, and even before he arrived on campus, I knew a little bit about him. Somebody in physics, and I forget who, had checked with Haverford and they said, “Oh, yeah, he’s a great guy. He’s been a good president of Haverford.” So, he had good reviews.

Stevens’ career was that he was a law professor at Yale, and then he went to Haverford as the president of Haverford, and then he came here. So, I asked my wife, Kelly, if she knew of a guy named Robert Stevens who was a legal historian. She said, “Oh, yeah. He’s at Yale.” Of course, she didn’t know he had left Yale. And she said, “He was a major figure in legal history.” And in fact, she had read a couple of his books. I think she also knew that he had played a role in the Connecticut birth control case where the Supreme Court ultimately ruled that for a married couple to use birth control fell within the privacy rights.⁹⁶ It was constitutionally protected. He played some role in that. I can’t remember what it was, but it was not a trivial role. So his reputation preceded him.

Then he came to campus and the first time I saw him was when he gave his first speech to the Academic Senate. He was a very articulate speaker. Of course, having a British accent speaking to the senate is not a bad thing. Just as I used to joke that you could fall asleep between the words of Bob Sinsheimer’s speeches, Stevens was a complete contrast. So I was pleased with the appointment and how things were going.

Well, soon thereafter came the so-called Asian food affair, or the Asian food fight. And oh, my God. Well, so let me preface this by saying that I had almost nothing to do with the Asian food fight. It was about Crown College and, to a lesser extent, Merrill College. I was in Oakes College, so it wasn’t my people. I also had been active in a number of things on

campus already, and I thought, from the outset, this would be a good one not to participate in.

I'm sure other people have described this more fully than I might, but what happened was that the colleges all had College Nights every month. In December, Crown College was going to have Asian night. It was scheduled for December 7th, and the bursar of the college, Don Van den Berg, a nice guy, a very sweet, nice man, whose parents, by the way, I think suffered in the Holocaust, well-loved in his college by the faculty—he changed the date of the College Night from December 7th, to something else, on the grounds that there might be students at Crown whose parents were somehow associated with Pearl Harbor, and he didn't want to fan flames.

Well, the you-know-what hit the fan. Immediately, he and his provost, Peggy Musgrave, were accused of being racists and drawing conclusions about a race based upon the actions of history, or the actions of a few. It just blew up in terms of rhetoric.

Then Stevens made what I think was a huge, huge blunder. He intervened. As chancellor, the right move would have been to not intervene, or to intervene behind the scenes. But he intervened in a very public way, and made some comments about it without necessarily knowing all of the facts. He, as I heard it, called in Peggy Musgrave and sort of read the riot act to her about what had happened at Crown College. The upshot of it is that Peggy resigned as provost. She was a popular provost at Crown. Van den Berg was beaten up something awful over this. I knew him slightly, but I didn't know him very well. It wasn't my college. But again, he just struck me as a nice guy. He didn't have a mean bone in his body, and I suspect he didn't have a racist bone in his body. He was motivated by good things. It may have been a huge mistake—I'm not saying it wasn't a big mistake to have changed that date—but I don't think he was ill-motivated, and I don't think he was

motivated out of fundamental racism. I think I heard it caused him to go into therapy, because he was such a center of that controversy. And it hugely pissed off the faculty at Crown College. I can't even begin to tell you how this struck me. But again, I'd stayed more or less out of it, I knew what was going on.

Then one day I was talking to Don Osterbrock. I've mentioned Don before. Don was a very solid man. He's a great scientist. Down to earth. I'd never seen him emotional. I had never in the years that I'd known him heard him utter a four-letter word. I was talking to Don about something. Somehow the issue of the Asian food affair came up and Don started cursing. And he started talking about Stevens. He called Stevens names that I'm even embarrassed to repeat many years later on tape. It was so unlike Don; it was so un-Don to do that. So it was clear how affected Don was. I emerged from that discussion kind of shaken, because I'd never seen Don so emotional. I understood. He was in Crown College, he may have had relationships, etcetera. But I also realized as soon as I left that office that Stevens was doomed. I've said this to many people: there are a lot of faculty you can piss off on the left, on the right. But you don't do that to the great silent majority, the great center. And basically, the Crown College faculty were the center.

I think virtually all of the faculty at that point became extremely negative about Stevens.

Reti: Really? And primarily because of that?

Blumenthal: Because of their loyalty to Peggy and to Don Van den Berg. They felt the chancellor was taking an extreme position.

The controversy didn't go away. The provost of Merrill College got into the fray a little bit and made some comments. There was a guy who worked in finance who I knew slightly, Victor Kimura. I liked Victor, but Victor jumped in about racism and how this was racist.⁹⁷ So there were lots of people fanning the flames for months, if not years, after that event.

When I was at Harvard on sabbatical years later, somehow the topic came up. I was with a bunch of people at Harvard and I was describing this event. They thought I was joking. They couldn't believe that this was going to lead to one of the big campus controversies of our time. Of course, I can understand how they felt that way.

Reti: Well is that something that's sort of unique to Santa Cruz, that these sorts of things blow up? Or is it just a comment on Harvard being a different sort of place?

Blumenthal: Oh, no. I think it was more of a comment about Santa Cruz. Things can blow up anywhere, but we take everything so much more seriously and jump on it. So, yeah, this was kind of unique to us. I think Stevens never recovered from that. I do believe that.

I held Stevens in higher regard than most faculty. I think he made a huge mistake on this. It basically undermined his entire chancellorship. But in talking to him, and at least in my interactions with him, I believed he was a well-meaning person, and that he brought some skills to bear on the job of chancellor. So, I was inclined to be more supportive and forgiving than many of my colleagues were.

On the other hand, I also recognize you can't be a chancellor of a campus if people don't support you. His entire tenure was in turmoil. It was exacerbated by the fact that when he came in, I believe that was when John Marcum, who'd been EVC here before who later went on to be the director of Education Abroad for the system. He died a year or two ago. He was the EVC here for a fairly long time. And then he went up to the Office of the President, and ultimately became the head of education abroad, which he did for many, many years. He had retired and Kivie Moldave had left.⁹⁸ Kivie had not been a particularly successful—well, he was an unsuccessful academic vice chancellor, let me just be frank. I

liked Kivie but I didn't see anything significant coming from him. I think he recognized it, too.

So, there was an opening for EVC when Stevens came in. He appointed Ronnie Gruhn as the acting EVC for two years.⁹⁹ That appointment was very controversial, for reasons that I thought weren't really appropriate. I thought it shouldn't have been as controversial as it was. The reason was that her husband, who was a faculty member somewhere like Montana or Wyoming, she insisted that a condition for her being the acting EVC was that there be a temporary position for her husband on campus on the faculty. Stevens arranged that. I don't know any of the details. It may have been that the department voted against it, or maybe the department didn't get a chance to vote. I don't know exactly what took place, or didn't take place, but I do know that that became a point of controversy. The feeling had been that the chancellor had imposed this appointment on the department against their will. So that became a point of controversy, even though it was a temporary appointment.

My two thoughts at the time were: number one, this was not an unreasonable request for someone to be the EVC; and number two, if it was temporary, what's the big deal? I thought it got pushed out of all proportion.

Ronnie herself was, during those two years, a rather controversial EVC. It's kind of amusing. There was the initial controversy about her appointment. And then she made some decisions about how she was going to operate and allocate resources. From where I was sitting in my little corner of the campus, I thought that she was doing a pretty good job. I was pretty supportive of what she was doing, at least at first. On the other hand, as the two years went on, she became much more controversial over the issue of these letters. You know what I'm talking about? Personnel letters, records?

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: Oh, my God. Where to begin? So UC does regular academic personnel reviews of all faculty, every two years for assistant and associate professors, every three years for full professors. We do full reviews, where departments vote; letters get written every time when the person is reviewed. That's just standard procedure. And it is standard procedure, in fact, it is explicitly written into the rules, that the personnel files that are put together may only be used to assess promotion or merit increase. They may not be used for other purposes. That's quite explicit and unambiguous, as far as I'm aware.

So it came to light at a certain point that Gruhn had brought into her office copies of the personnel files for a number of faculty, particularly faculty in economics, I'm told. There may have been other departments as well. I don't even know exactly which faculty they were, though Jack Michaelson told me he was one of them. She had done this in order to read their files to assess how good the department is, and whether or not she should allocate resources depending upon the quality of the department. That was the allegation. There was no doubt that the files existed.

It generated controversy. Some faculty filed grievances, I think Jack Michaelson was one of them, from economics.¹⁰⁰ I know he filed a grievance because he told me that. He may have announced it at some public meeting. This all culminated in a meeting of the Academic Senate, which was quite possibly the first time I ever spoke up at a senate meeting because, remember, I was shy and retiring. I mean, seriously. It's really true.

So we had this senate meeting, and oh my God, was it contentious. It was very well attended. It was in some big lecture hall. I was sitting way in the back and the chancellor and the EVC were up there. They gave their little speeches. Then there was a discussion. I guess it came up during the questioning period of the chancellor and the AVC. It was all

about these personnel files. There was question after question after question about these personnel files, and whether they existed, and what they did, etcetera. Stevens and Gruhn were trying to answer those questions, or not answer those questions, and everyone was frustrated and angry. I remember John Ellis was filing his teeth into sharp points.

Reti: (laughs) He's not someone you want to have as an enemy.

Blumenthal: (laughs) But he wasn't alone. Many, many people were up there. Finally, I jumped to my feet and got recognized. I suggested that discussing this on the floor of an Academic Senate meeting wasn't the best way to resolve the issue, that I thought that it should really be discussed in the appropriate committees. So I made a motion to refer the matter of these personnel files to Privilege and Tenure and to the Committee on Academic Personnel, to review what happened and report back to the senate.

It made me a hero. Everybody was happy with me. The chancellor and EVC and their allies thought this was great because it stopped the discussion. And the people who were so against the chancellor and EVC realized that they weren't going to get anywhere at the meeting, and this would be an opportunity to have a more substantive examination.

I think what happened was my motion got ruled out of order, because it was out of order at that moment in time. But I was invited to resubmit it, and as soon as it was appropriate to do so, I resubmitted my motion. And it carried, if not unanimously, almost unanimously to get those reports out. I don't even remember what the report said anymore, but I think it was true that those files had been copied. It was a pretty egregious thing to have done.

It was funny, because I ran into Michael at a party, I think it was the bar mitzvah of Ed and Miriam Landesman's son.¹⁰¹ He was there. This was just before he was going to take office as EVC. I went over to him and I reminded him of this controversy about the files.

I said, “You know, Michael, everyone’s going to tell you what you should do about this and that. But I’ll give you one piece of free advice.” I said, “What you ought to do your first day in the office is take those files and burn them. Just burn them, and tell the world that you burned the files and that we’ve moved on.” Michael laughed, of course, because I said, “That’s what Harry Truman would have done.” (laughs)

Michael’s response, which didn’t really surprise me, was, “No, no, no, no, no. I cannot do that. There is a procedure within UC for getting rid of inappropriately duplicated materials that violate—” You know, and he cited something. I’m sure he’s right, but to me, that wasn’t sexy enough. I thought the faculty needed—

Reti: A dramatic symbol.

Blumenthal: Dramatic. But that wasn’t his style.

So he was in place and then I went off to Harvard on sabbatical for a year. During that year at Harvard, it was announced that Robert Stevens was stepping down. One of my best friends at Harvard was a guy named Arthur Levine.¹⁰² He and his wife and children lived just a couple of blocks from us in Belmont during that year. Arthur was a professor of education at Harvard, with a specialty in higher education. He later went on to become the president of Columbia Teachers’ College and is now the president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Anyway, I was chatting with Arthur. I said, “So, Arthur, how do you find a new chancellor in a way that maximizes the chance of a good outcome—what do you do?”

So he told me all the steps you have to do in a chancellor search. I didn’t know it at the time, but I now know we at UC do all of those steps. So I said to him, “So let’s just say you do everything that you just said. What’s the probability five years later that you’ll be happy with the results?”

He said, “Oh, well, if you do everything I said, and do it diligently,” he said, “Five years later, 50 percent of the time you’ll be really pleased and you’ll say we made a great choice for our chancellor. About 30 percent of the time you’ll say, ‘Well, this was okay. This worked out. I mean, we had hoped for more; maybe somebody else might have been better. But no complaints. This is okay. But not great.’ Twenty percent of the time it will be a disaster. The trick is recognizing that 20 percent when it’s upon you and doing something about it,” which we’ve had some experience on this campus with.

Reti: Well, if you don’t mind me asking, I’m aware that there was some talk of trying to—and people have said this in the past—of asking Stevens to step down.

Blumenthal: Oh, I’m sure many people asked him to step down.

Reti: And, of course, we’ve had this perhaps undeserved reputation at UCSC—I’m wondering what you think of this reputation of being ungovernable.

Blumenthal: Oh, yes.

Reti: So is the *ungovernable* word a rumor? Or was that actually ever said by President Gardner?

Blumenthal: Oh, good lord, yes. I was told when I became chancellor that this was the ungovernable campus. I got a huge amount of credit when I was chancellor for being able to quote “tame” the ungovernable campus. I heard it from two presidents of UC—Bob Dynes and Dick Atkinson—quite explicitly. Everyone believed Santa Cruz was ungovernable.

Reti: And that was because of Christensen?

Blumenthal: Christensen, Stevens, and then Denice Denton.

Reti: So do you think that there's anything about the campus that is—

(Blumenthal sighs)

Reti: This is a hard question, I know.

Blumenthal: It's a really hard question. We have a history of making it difficult for some of our leading administrators to succeed. On the other hand, they didn't make it necessarily easy, either. Did Christensen deserve the pushback that he got? Probably he did. He did not lead the campus well. Did Stevens deserve that pushback? Yeah. Stevens could have ended the Asian food affair business so easily. All he had to do was A, not intervene; or B, even after he intervened, come back and say he apologized, he wanted to clear the air, we need to come together as a university. Just those words would have meant a lot! But he didn't do it. He was perceived constantly as being on one side only. It's kind of like Donald Trump today, in a way. He had those opportunities, so I don't think it was ungovernability. I think it was the lack of the ability to understand what the campus really needed at that instant.

Denice was a completely different story.

Reti: Yeah. We can talk about that later.

Blumenthal: I don't think the campus is ungovernable. I just think that it requires a person who has certain characteristics and a certain value system in order to successfully govern the campus.

Reti: And what are those?

Blumenthal: A commitment to shared governance, a willingness to be okay with having dissenting views and having people have very different opinions.

Reti: Okay. All right. Thank you, George.

Blumenthal: I think that was hard for Stevens. And I think it scarred him, too. He left and he went to London and he became a barrister in London for many years, never to be heard from again, almost.

After I became chancellor, at some point I invited him to some event, maybe to Founders Day. I did get a nice note back from him, declining for health reasons. I had a fairly decent relationship with him. A year or two later after that, I was in London for something completely different. I just, kind of on a lark, thought I'd call him up and say hello. I thought he was still in London, but it turned out he had retired and he had moved to Oxford. He was very nice on the phone when I talked to him. We had a very pleasant conversation. He was very gracious and invited me to come visit him in Oxford, which I really didn't want to do, because I knew it was a long train ride up and back, and I didn't have that much time. Maybe now I regret it. Maybe I would have learned a few things from him about history.

But in any event, I just chatted with him. What was interesting was he asked me only one question about the campus. He wanted to know what had happened to his old enemies. I remember thinking how horribly depressing that is. I mean, seriously, if that's all you can think to ask, what happened to your old enemies—

Reti: That's how you frame the story of those four and a half years, whatever it was.

Blumenthal: I was shocked. He didn't want to know anything else, or at least he didn't ask me about anything else.

Reti: Another thing that was very significant about the Stevens administration was his negotiations with the city.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: I know we'll return to that topic when we get to your tenure, but do you have any comments on that?

Blumenthal: So again, I was fairly out of it. I had the impression that, more than many of the other chancellors, he actually had reached out to the city and that they had a fairly amicable relationship. That was certainly my impression, that he did that more than his predecessors and more than his successors. But other than that, I really don't know much.

Reti: Okay. Anything else about the Stevens era?

Blumenthal: No, that's about all I can think of offhand.

The Narrative Evaluation System

Reti: Okay. So, what shall we talk about next? Narrative evaluations?

Blumenthal: Sure. So narrative evaluations were the norm when I arrived. I loved them. I loved the fact that we didn't have to reduce everything to a single letter. I loved the fact that I could say about students what they really did, and be a little bit richer in their performance measure. I thought they were great. Now it's true, I didn't teach large lecture courses, so I didn't have to write hundreds of them, which I probably would not have enjoyed. But still, I thought it was a great system and I really, really liked it.

But it was controversial. It started becoming controversial in the seventies, because the seventies became kind of the Me Generation. Whereas in the sixties, everybody wanted to come to Santa Cruz, by the seventies, nobody wanted to come to Santa Cruz. Part of the reason was the fear that this would destroy your future. You couldn't get into medical school, the myth went, if you went to Santa Cruz, because we didn't give grades. Well in

fact, as I understand it, the evidence, the actual real evidence, was quite to the contrary. Our students did remarkably well getting into things like medical school. But that was the myth that was out there.

So at some point, the campus, the senate, basically decided that students could elect to have grades in their class. So there were optional grades, and that was seen as a way of dealing with some of the issues surrounding the fear that people wouldn't get into their graduate or professional schools. I think that was a perfectly reasonable thing to do, and we did it.

The controversy didn't go away. I have to admit, there were some unfortunate aspects to the narrative evaluation system. For example, my wife is a professor at Hastings College of the Law. And what she told me was that at Hastings, when they got an application from UCSC, what they would do is they would have a clerk go through all of the narrative evaluations and assign a grade point average based upon reading the narrative evaluations. Then they would proceed only from that assigned GPA in terms of their admissions decision. So nobody making a decision actually read the evaluations and they had consigned this to a clerk, who was not an academic.

Reti: That's scary.

Blumenthal: It is scary. We would say in Santa Cruz that was an abrogation of responsibility. They might say we don't have the time for this. This isn't a right or wrong thing; it's simply an observation.

So this discussion continued kind of on a back burner. I wasn't a part of the discussions that made it suddenly come out as a controversy, but it emerged one spring in a call for a special meeting of the senate by Lincoln Taiz—and I don't remember, there were some others, too, but I remember Lincoln because he was a friend of mine. He was one of the

prime movers. They called a special meeting of the Academic Senate to consider a motion to end the narrative evaluations and to adopt a pure grading system.

And boy, did life become controversial. The alumni went crazy. A lot of faculty went crazy. This was all done in a rush because it was a special meeting of the senate. And it was one of those things where we had no idea what would ultimately happen.

Reti: Had there been a committee study or anything like that? It was just, let's have this meeting?

Blumenthal: No, it just sort of came out. At least, as near as I could tell—

Reti: From your experience.

Blumenthal: From my experience. Maybe there was more to it than that. But I don't remember that.

Anyway, we had this meeting and it was quite a scene, as you might imagine. First of all, before the meeting, all faculty got many, many, many emails and letters from concerned alumni and from students lobbying us to continue the system as it was. This was in either the spring of the year 2000 or the spring of the year 2001.

Reti: There has been such a long story, so many different permutations of that particular battle.

Blumenthal: But the crucial meeting was this special meeting of the senate. I remember it was spring, and there wasn't going to be a lot of time to do anything immediately if we didn't act then. So we had this meeting. It was in one of the large lecture halls on campus, probably Thimann Lecture Hall, although I can't swear it. Anyway, lots of people in the audience, not just senate members. A huge turnout from members of the senate. So lots

of people were there, lots of emotion. And procedurally, what happened was, as we started to discuss this, one member of the faculty got up and made a motion to table the issue. It was seconded. So the issue on the table was not whether to get rid of narratives. The issue was whether to table the issue. Kind of the same substantive thing, but posed slightly differently.

Then people got up and spoke. I think it's only faculty who can speak at senate meetings, except for certain student representatives of the colleges and of the student government. So many, many people got up to speak. There were long lines at the microphone. Some of my colleagues who rarely, if ever, came to senate meetings—I remember Sandy Faber was there, and she spoke in favor, she spoke against the motion to table it. She wanted to get rid of the narratives. But many, many people getting up and speaking on both sides of the issue.

Reti: So was there leaning in one direction or the other, in your observation?

Blumenthal: It wasn't clear which way it was going to lean. Roger Anderson was the chair of the senate. I think they even arranged it so if you were voting in favor of the motion, you stood on one side of the room and went to the microphone, and if you were in favor of the other side, you stood on the other side of the room. That way they alternated between microphones.

The discussion went on for a very long time. I listened to it very, very carefully. People marshalled their arguments. We were getting toward the end, because it was getting to be five o'clock. I made a decision to stand up and go to the microphone, although I didn't know whether I'd get a chance to speak. I think I ended up being the last speaker. It was kind of dramatic because I got up there and said that I wanted to begin by thanking Lincoln and the others for bringing what I thought was a really important issue to the

Academic Senate. I wanted to affirm that this was a senate issue, and we were the ones who were going to have to decide it, no matter how controversial or how close that decision would be. I also acknowledged that there was real merit to their proposal to eliminate narrative evaluations. By then, it was becoming very difficult to do this in lecture classes. People were running computer programs to write narrative evaluations of students. Some of the spirit of the original idea behind narrative evaluations had been lost. So I said I had a lot of sympathy toward this idea.

And then I said, “However.” (Reti laughs) As soon as I said “however,” there was this cheer that went up from where all the alumni were sitting. I said, “However, I just don’t think it’s appropriate for us to resolve a matter that is so central to the campus and so important—for us to resolve this at an emergency meeting of the Academic Senate. I think it’s something we need to think through carefully. I think we need to have a reasoned debate about the subject. So, I find myself in a position where I’m not sure how I’ll vote on the ultimate motion. I could well imagine myself supporting it, reluctantly, but nevertheless supporting it. But I certainly cannot support having that vote now.” I urged everyone to vote in favor of the tabling motion. I think I was the last person to speak.

Then we had the vote and the motion to table. I’m not sure I remember this exactly right anymore, but I think the vote came out tied. I think Roger Anderson voted then as chair, exercised his right to break a tie and voted in favor of tabling the motion. But there was some ambiguity about what the vote actually was, etcetera. I think that what I just said was true. It was believed to be tied. Then later on somebody else tried to change their vote to make it different and we got into all kinds of issues of fairness because people were leaving the room, etcetera. But I think at the end of the day, that’s what Roger did. And the senate minutes will show what was recorded as happening.¹⁰³

Reti: Sorry. “In favor of tabling the motion” means—can you put that in plain English for the—

Blumenthal: It means that the motion is not to be acted on at that moment.

Reti: So it’s dead, basically, for that moment.

Blumenthal: For that moment.

Reti: Right. So then we’d continue to have evaluations.

Blumenthal: We would continue to have evaluations.

Reti: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: And again, my main interest and my main argument was we needed a more careful and reasoned discussion. There was this feeling among alumni that we had sprung this on them at the last minute. And that was true, actually. I felt that they should have a voice. I think I said that in my remarks as well.

Reti: Were there current students who were protesting as well? Or just alums?

Blumenthal: Oh, no, it was also current students. But the alumni were much more invested, as I recall—

Reti: Understandably.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And it was interesting, because after the meeting was over, I remember that I was so touched that Lincoln came over to me and thanked me. He said he really appreciated the fact that I had thanked him and others for having brought the issue forward. I hadn’t even thought about it. I had just said what came into my mind. But

I thought it showed real class on his part that he said that because I think he was disappointed that it didn't get resolved immediately.

So nothing happened right then. This meeting must have been in the spring of 2000 because then in the fall of 2000, we took up this issue for real. There was a meeting of the senate where we were going to take it up. The students came and they basically chained the room shut that we were supposed to have the meeting in. I remember it was so funny, because they literally put chains there and they had students inside to defend it so that we couldn't have our meeting. And Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood was there.¹⁰⁴ It was really fascinating to watch M.R.C. Part of me at the time thought, this is horrible. How can you keep the senate from even acting? We're going to have to figure out a way that we can have the meeting. But there was almost no way to do that without bringing in lots of police and making it a really messy thing. I think M.R.C., quite correctly, didn't want to escalate it to that point. So they tried various other things, but the bottom line was the meeting didn't happen.

But we had another meeting scheduled. I think that one was at Kresge. There was another meeting where we did take a vote, and the vote was pretty strong to eliminate narrative evaluations as a *mandatory* form of grading. In other words, what that vote did was it instituted grades not as an option, but as a mandate. It took narrative evaluations and made them optional.

Reti: So the student had to ask for it.

Blumenthal: Yes. The student had to ask for it. For those of us who liked narratives, it gave us an opportunity to continue it, and hope that there would be enough students asking for it that this would be meaningful. For those who wanted everyone to have grades, now everyone did have grades. I believe that the proposal that ultimately came

forward for grades was described as one of the most rigorous grading systems in the UC system.

Reti: Rigorous in what sense?

Blumenthal: In terms of how it was designed, and fewest exceptions, etcetera. So that must have gone through CEP [Committee on Educational Policy]. CEP must have come forward with the proposal the next year. I don't remember it well enough to say that for sure. I may have the sequence slightly wrong from memory. But I do know that the proposal came forward, I think from CEP, to institute a very strict grading system. And kind of at the same time, we made narratives optional. The two may not have happened at exactly the same time. There may have been one meeting between them or something. But it did happen. I don't remember whether there was a mail ballot on this, but there probably was.

By that time, it was pretty clear that obligatory narratives were doomed. And absence of letter grades was also doomed.

Reti: How did you feel when that happened?

Blumenthal: Well, I was more optimistic. I thought there was a real shot that narratives would continue in addition to grades. I thought that might be the best of all possible worlds. I was fairly optimistic about it at that time. I think I was naïve, but nevertheless, optimistic.

But, of course, what happened was, over the course of time, some people continued to do narratives. When I became chair of the senate, I started working with Barbara Rogoff.¹⁰⁵ She's still on campus. She's one of our most eminent people in psychology. She was a faculty research lecturer. She did a bunch of work to create tools for faculty so they could

continue to do narratives. She worked with the Center for Innovations in Teaching and Learning, or whatever it was called then. They hired some people to do that. I remember having a long talk with her about it, several talks. I was very supportive of our doing that because I really wanted narratives to continue, as did she. We had a confluence of views there.¹⁰⁶

In the fall of 2001, I became the chair of the senate. (We'll talk more about that later.) Somebody came to see me and said, "Well you know, part of being chair of the senate means that you're an ex officio member of the alumni council, and an ex officio member of the foundation."

I said, "Say what? What did I sign up for?" (laughter)

They said, "Oh, yeah. You have to go to all of the Alumni Council meetings and all of the Foundation board meetings."

I said, "Do I have to?"

They said yes. And then they said, "Well you know," they gave an example. When Michael Cowan stopped being chair of the senate, he still went for somebody else.¹⁰⁷ So I decided to call up Roger Anderson and see what the hell this was all about. I talked to Roger and he said, "Oh, yeah, yeah, you have to go to those things." I said, "Well, I was told that the former chair could do it in lieu of the current chair."

He said, "Well, that's possible, but that isn't going to happen." (laughter) And then he said to me, "You know what, George? You're going to enjoy the Alumni Council and you will hate the foundation board." In fact, it was true. He was absolutely right.

So I, of course, did it. You know me. I don't shirk. So I went to my first Alumni Council meeting. It was amazing to me how hostile they were toward me because of the narrative

evaluation thing. They were bitter at the faculty for having voted to eliminate narratives and to go to grades. Really, just *bitter* is all I can think of. So they let me know that. (laughs)

So finally I said to them, “Look, we still have narrative evaluations. You can just be mad and stay mad as long as you want, if that’s what you want to do. On the other hand, we still have narrative evaluations, but they’re not mandatory anymore. That means they’re voluntary. That means we need to work with faculty to get them to want to write narrative evaluations. So you could work with me and work with others to make narrative evaluations real and something that will work, or you can just stay mad and probably more and more faculty will just stop doing them.”

They took that criticism really well. I didn’t know if they’d be really mad at me then. But they took it in the spirit in which it was offered. And actually, from then on my relationship with the Alumni Council was very, very positive.

Chancellor Karl Pister

Okay. So we’re going to talk a little bit about Karl Pister coming in. Pister was appointed as the acting chancellor and then there was a search and he was appointed permanent chancellor.¹⁰⁸

But in terms of the transition between Stevens and Pister, I do want to mention one thing. I had been on sabbatical at Harvard the year before, the last year of Stevens’ tenure. Early on in the year, I got a call from some people in my department saying they wanted to make me be department chair again. I wasn’t thrilled with the thought. I mean, the whole point of going on sabbatical is to reinvigorate your research and to have it kind of dragged down as soon as I got back didn’t seem like a lot of fun. I didn’t enjoy being department chair, so I really didn’t want to do it. So I suggested they should go to Doug Lin instead. And

what you need to know is that Doug Lin and I for years had had this ongoing dialog about each of us wanting the other one to be the next department chair. (Reti laughs) We both knew we were at risk, so we'd had that dialog back and forth many, many, many times.

The department called me a few times and kept saying, "We really want you to do this." I kept putting them off. Then one day I'm sitting there minding my own business in my office at Harvard and I get a call from the chair of the senate Committee on Committees. He wanted to talk to me about becoming the chair of CAP, the Committee on Academic Personnel, the next year. That's a humongous job. You have to review all of the faculty files. And the chair has even more work to do, so it's a big, big deal to be chair of CAP. And I don't know how to say this—I am not a judgmental person; I don't enjoy judging my peers. So even on campus, it's something I never really wanted to do.

Now of course, it's true, as chancellor, I have to make decisions on tenure and stuff. And it's something I do. But being judgmental is just not my thing. I really, really didn't want to do this. And I felt so embarrassed, because I have always felt that obligation to do senate service. So I mumbled something like, "Well, I don't think I can do this, because I think I'm going to be slated to be department chair next year."

Reti: (laughs) It suddenly looked very attractive.

Blumenthal: It looked much more attractive to me. So I thought about that for a day or so. Then I had this horrible feeling of panic. I checked in with the senate office to make sure that the person who called me really was the chair of CoC and that this really had been an offer. (laughs) I had this sudden fear that Doug Lin had put somebody up to it—
(laughs)

Reti: That's funny.

Blumenthal: I told Doug that story later and he felt honored that I would think him capable of such thinking.

Reti: (laughs) Wow.

Blumenthal: So anyway, that's how I finally agreed. I guess I knew it was inevitable that I would agree. That really pushed me over the edge. So I agreed to be department chair.

It turned out they had been doing a search for Observatory director. Bob Kraft had resigned as the director of UCO/Lick Observatory. His associate director was Joe Miller. The time of Bob's retirement had already passed, so Joe was the acting director. So when I got back, I found that we had an acting director for Lick Observatory and UCO. They had done a search, and Joe was one of the candidates in the search, but the search had never concluded. It was sort of in stasis. Nobody knew who was deciding what, when where, how, and whom. Presumably somebody at Office of the President, maybe the president, maybe the provost, had to make a decision or do something. But nothing had emerged. And this had gone on for some months.

So when I got back, I was talking to Joe. Joe was really angry. He was angry. He had been a candidate; he had heard nothing. And he had decided that he was not willing to remain on as the acting director.

So I went to see Bob Kraft, to talk about this. Bob and I decided we had to go see the chancellor. But the chancellor was by that time no longer Stevens and Pister hadn't arrived. The acting chancellor was Michael Tanner.

Reti: I'd forgotten that ever happened.

Blumenthal: It was about a month or so. So we went to see Michael and we explained to him the dilemma. And really our request of him was to just kick the people up at OP in the behind so that they would do something. And that if not, a crisis was impending.

Michael was really good about it. He completely understood the issues. We talked about it. And sure enough, shortly thereafter, Joe was appointed the director. I want to give Michael praise for that. Michael was always very highly respected at the Office of the President. I think it says something that he had that level of influence.

Then Karl Pister came in. It was a strange experience. Pister—it was clear he was a really solid guy. He had been the dean of engineering at UC Berkeley for many years. He was clearly somebody who had leadership skills, understood the politics of UC, and could move the campus forward. He had a seriousness about him that struck people well. So we figured if he could be the dean of engineering at Berkeley and be successful, he could be the chancellor here.

His tenure started, but it didn't really go that well at first, from the perspective of the science division. The feeling was that solid science was not being supported at the campus.

I was chair of astronomy. The chairs in Physical and Biological Sciences decided we wanted to have a meeting with him. So Dave Kliger, who was very good, said, "Look, it's fine with me to have a meeting with him. It should come from you, not from me. But if we have the meeting, I need to be there." We all said that was fine.

And so, who else should volunteer to arrange the meeting but Mike Nauenberg, who was then the director of the Institute of Nonlinear Sciences. Mike volunteered to contact the chancellor's office and arrange to have this meeting. So the next meeting the chairs came and Mike announced that he had indeed contacted the chancellor's office, and the chancellor had refused to meet with the chairs in the sciences, on the grounds that if he

met with us he'd have to meet with all the divisions and he didn't think that that would be a worthwhile endeavor.

There ensued a rather interesting discussion. People were angry. And in fact, what had happened the previous week was that there'd been a big student demonstration at McHenry Library and the student demonstration was dissipated only when Pister came outside and spoke with the students and talked to them about their demands. So one suggestion was that maybe we as chairs of the science departments should hold a demonstration. (laughs) I'll even admit to you, I was the one who suggested it.

Reti: (laughs) That's funny.

Blumenthal: But nobody was going to go down that road. There was a fair amount of anger. When I got back to my office after the chairs meeting, I called Julia Armstrong, who I knew quite well. Julia Armstrong [Zwart] was at the time, I think, the assistant chancellor.¹⁰⁹ I talked to Julia and I said how angry people were and how I thought it was really unreasonable that the chairs couldn't have the meeting. She heard me out. She was really good. She said she would see what she could do.

And like an hour later, Mike Nauenberg comes to my office. He says, "I don't know what's going on over there. I just got a call from the chancellor's office that they're willing to meet with us now." I never told him what caused that to happen. I'm not sure I told anyone what I had done. Until now.

Anyway, we had the meeting sometime later. All of us trooped over. It was a really interesting meeting. Karl Pister was there with Michael. All the chairs were there, and Dave Kliger. It was, at one level, a very good meeting. It was very pleasant. It cleared a lot of the issues out of the air. But I wasn't particularly impressed with the meeting, I have to say to you. I just felt that it was all very pleasant, bonhomie and all of that, expressions of

support. But in terms of nitty-gritty, I wasn't sure there was any outcome. I walked back with Dave and I told him what I thought. I said, "Am I just being a nattering nabob of negativism?" (Reti laughs) He said no. He said that was his reaction as well. But I know the other chairs were really pleased with the meeting.

So that was the first major encounter with Karl.

Reti: Can you tell me what it was that the chairs were asking for, just generally?

Blumenthal: There was a feeling that solid academic research was not getting the attention or the rewards on the campus that it deserved and that he was backing away from a commitment to excellence. That was the fundamental, underlying question.

There was of course (and I don't blame him for this) this thing called the Pister Report. I'm not sure everything about that it did, but one of its recommendations had been on academic personnel, that there be greater weight given to the teaching by faculty in the decision of whether to award tenure. That was one of the major conclusions of the Pister Report. So that may have fed in, or at least that attitude may have fed in to the unhappiness of the department chairs within the sciences.

Reti: So does this have to do with promotion and tenure?

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: But he had just arrived.

Blumenthal: He had just arrived. But he had authored the Pister Report, which was a systemwide report. It wasn't the Pister Report that was really the main motivator. I'm just saying there was a bit of background that was along those same lines. I think it was a sense that resources were not going to flow to those departments, or those areas, that were really

doing first-class research. Instead, resources were flowing for other considerations. That was the fundamental level of unhappiness among the chairs.

But Karl used his charm and I think he convinced people that he was serious. And I think Karl was serious. I don't think there was any effort on his part to not be forthright and honest. I just think that he had a set of priorities that may have differed a little bit from the chairs.

Reti: He was trying to balance the old UCSC vision with the UCSC of the research university and kind of walk that line. I can imagine that might have led to some difficult kinds of conversations and balancing.

Blumenthal: Exactly. I always liked Karl. And as time went on, it was clear that he was devoting most of his time and attention to issues outside of the university: fundraising, working within UC, working in Sacramento. His style with Michael Tanner was kind of Mr. Inside/Mr. Outside, which is an old football term. He would deal with the outside world and he left Michael to deal with the campus.

Reti: The role of chancellor as the campus has matured has changed. As we've gone forward in time, it seems that the role has perhaps become more of that than an operations person.

Blumenthal: It certainly has. I will tell you that sometimes when I talk to older faculty, they seem to have a perception of the chancellorship that it is what it was in Dean McHenry's day, or even in Bob Sinsheimer's day. And it really isn't. It's a very, very different job today than it was in those days.

Reti: So was Karl Pister here at the beginning of that turn?

Blumenthal: Karl may have been at the beginning. I think he took it a little further than I would feel comfortable. I would not describe myself and EVC Marlene [Tromp] as Mr. Outside and Ms. Inside. I have great interest in what's going on on campus. But to some extent, it at least was my perception from my own little corner of the campus that that's what was happening.

And it was a bit difficult and, I think, even tragic because Michael is a man of great strength and insight, but he was not a visionary. His big visionary thing was this document that he rewrote twenty times called "Managing Faculty Resources." It was an allocation formula for how you allocate faculty among departments. That discussion went on through the Pister years, when Michael was EVC. He wrote a preliminary draft and then he wrote a draft. Then sent it to the senate, and then he revised the draft over and over again. He kept saying, "This is what we're going to do on our campus." We can have an interesting discussion about whether or not it was a worthwhile approach to take. But even if it was a worthwhile approach to take, it wasn't a vision. Karl wasn't supplying the vision, and Michael wasn't supplying the vision. I don't think Michael would have been comfortable supplying a real vision. So I view it as a failure of Karl that he didn't impute to the campus a vision for the direction that we were going. Michael's a very capable individual, but not everyone can do everything. Michael got hung up on this document that he seemed to rewrite every few months. It became almost laughable to me that he kept rewriting it but never implementing it. As chair of my department, I felt a need to prepare ourselves for this new era of managing faculty resources. I wanted to position the department so that we could take advantage as much as possible of the new rules, so to speak. So I wanted him to either do it or not do it. You know what I mean?

Reti: (laughs) Right, right, right.

Blumenthal: Anyway, that became more and more intense. We got to a point where the chairs were getting uppity again. So there was a discussion about having another meeting. But nobody wanted to do that.

So it was ultimately decided by the chairs in science that we wanted there to be another meeting with a representative of the chairs, with either Pister or Tanner, to talk about some of the allocation issues within the campus. I got elected. (Reti laughs) So I made a decision to go to Michael, not to Pister. My reasoning was that I thought that the issues I wanted to talk about ultimately were in Michael's purview to decide. I didn't think involving Karl was going to be helpful. I remember going to Michael with three issues. I'm not sure I remember what they were. I know one of them must have had to do with the allocation of resources within the division.

I remember saying to him very explicitly, "So if you're going to do your 'Managing Faculty Resources' thing, do it. Don't futz around anymore. Either do it or dump it. But don't futz around anymore." I remember he said he couldn't do it because there was so much opposition from the senate. I said, "This is a budgetary issue. You have the authority. If you choose not to do it because of senate opposition, that's fine. But make a decision. Don't keep this dangling out there as something we might or might not do."

And the third issue was, I urged him on behalf of all of the chairs that we needed to actually start a school of engineering. The need was intense; we had put this off too long. This was something that was envisioned for the campus from day one, and the time was now to actually do it. So I waxed eloquent about the need for a school of engineering.

So that was the meeting. It was a pleasant enough meeting. I had my say, and I reported back. Of course, Michael was noncommittal on everything. That was his style. That's okay.

Then about a week, two weeks later, I get a call from the dean's office asking me if I would serve on a task force to institute the new school of engineering and implement the plans that had been developed, including the plans for applied math, which I'd lobbied for in particular. Note that I wasn't the main lobbyist for applied math. Doug Lin took that lead.

Maybe a word on that. Applied math came about because the math department here was seen as completely disconnected from science. They had a bunch of pure mathematicians. They had almost no applied mathematicians. Many of us in the sciences, myself included, always interacted with mathematicians. I always wanted to seek their help or interactions. I saw what I did as being kind of at the interface of mathematics, physics, and astronomy. Others felt the same way. Doug Lin felt that much more strongly. So the movement for applied math was much more his movement than it was mine. But there were a bunch of other faculty throughout the division who signed onto that. So there were petitions to start an applied math department.

Dave Kliger was supportive of our goals but was concerned, of course, about the cost and the administrative bloat of starting another department. So Dave took what I thought was a very reasonable position. He said he wanted to put together a task force that would have some people from the science division and some people from math to come up with a plan that would incorporate applied math in a meaningful way within the math department. It was a perfectly reasonable and sensible approach. So we put together that group, which I was a member of, and that group did a lot of work. And we came up with some plan. We all agreed that we would have somebody from each department go back to their departments, and the math people go back to the math department to see whether everyone would support it. Then we'd all meet together with Dave.

So we had this meeting with Dave. It was scheduled for a two-hour meeting slot. It was really kind of funny because basically all of the science representatives reported back that our departments were just fine with this plan. We were fully supportive of it. Math came back and said they were fine with it, too, on the condition that Dave allocate—and then they listed a number of math positions—both to hire for this plan and also to fill out the needs of pure math.

Well, Dave pointed out that the demand of the math department at that point was equivalent to his total FTE allocation for the whole division for the next three years, so this just wasn't going to happen.

Reti: And this is at the beginning of the 1990s when we were in a budget crisis as well.

Blumenthal: Right. And all of this took about fifteen minutes. It was funny because the meeting went on for the full two hours, but I just kind of lost interest and daydreamed the rest of the meeting because it seemed to me pointless. We could talk till we were blue in the face, but we were never going to get around this. So this effort failed. And that had been a few years earlier.

So anyway, now I get this call saying, “Come help us, come be a part of this group that’s going to institute the new school of engineering.” I was elated. I had just talked to Michael. I thought I must have convinced Michael that this was the right thing to do. Oh, my God, finally I had some influence on this institution in a meaningful way. (Reti laughs)

Then we had the meeting of this group and I talked to Pat Mantey. He told me what really happened. So what really happened was that Jack Baskin, at Pat’s urging, had a conversation with Karl and basically said to him, “Look, I’ve been around a long time, and we’ve been talking about a school of engineering for a long time. I want to see it happen, and I want to see it happen before I die. So I’m willing to give some money to start this

school of engineering and I'm willing to contact some of my friends who are well-to-do and see if they'll also contribute to the school of engineering, if you'll actually get the damn thing started." And Pister agreed. (laughs) So it had nothing to do with me or my golden tongued oratory that got it started.

The other thing that happened during Pister's time was this big scandal about the meeting of the chancellors being recorded, and what was said at the chancellors' meeting. The Council of Chancellors meets monthly, and it has for time immemorial. Apparently, during Pister's time, they did meetings by telephone, or they may have been video-conferenced. But they did them remotely, using the technology of the time. And during one of those meetings, somebody recorded the meeting and sent the recording to a newspaper. That was controversial because much of the meeting was spent—the governor had appointed an Asian American to the board of regents. But for reasons that I no longer remember, that appointment was deemed highly controversial. It may be that it was the end of the governor's term, or it may have been that there was some other reason. So a good chunk of that meeting was spent having the president twist the arm of Chancellor Tien at Berkeley to lobby members of the state senate to confirm this regental appointment. It was clear that he was chosen because he was Asian. And it was also clear, apparently from the transcript, or from the recording, that he was a reluctant participant in this endeavor. Tien was a man of the highest ethical standards. He was an amazingly good man, so it doesn't surprise me that he was reluctant. So this became a big scandal. The other part of the discussion, apparently, was about their salaries and how they could get their salaries higher as chancellors.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Which I'm sure went over really well.

Of course, they published the most embarrassing things. I was over at Pister's house for an event when this all happened and Karl was furious. He felt this was one of the worst things that had ever happened, that they recorded a chancellors' meeting and published it. I agreed with him that this was inappropriate. But I also said, "Some of the discussions that you had were still inappropriate and they shouldn't have come out." But given that they have come out, it didn't instill a lot of faith. I don't think he ever accepted that. He was just furious that they had come out.

My view of Karl's chancellorship has evolved over time. I thought when he stepped down that he had not been a particularly good chancellor. I wouldn't have said he was bad, but I would have said he wasn't particularly good. For the reasons that I mentioned, I felt that he hadn't given us a vision; I think he delegated too much, etcetera.

On the other hand, today I would take a different view. I think he was a pretty good chancellor. He did some things that had long-term benefit for the campus, starting the Pister scholarships for community colleges, for example. He started the Educational Partnership Center, which did outreach to underserved communities in Monterey and Santa Cruz and other areas around here. Those were from Karl Pister. I think he did many good things that, as a faculty member, I wasn't really all that aware of at the time. So over the course of time, I've come to appreciate his chancellorship much more. I would now say he was a good chancellor, maybe not the best chancellor we've had in our history, but certainly a very good one. I think it's interesting that my views have evolved in that regard.

Reti: And he was very involved in the whole battle over affirmative action that was happening at that time.

Blumenthal: He was. And that took some courage. Those were the days of SP1 and SP2.¹¹⁰

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Karl was quite clear where he stood. I give him a lot of credit for that. I mean frankly, the whole university gets a lot of credit for that.

Teaching and Research

Reti: Today is November 7, 2018, the day after Election Day. I'm here with George Blumenthal. This is Irene Reti, for our ninth session of the oral history we're doing together, on this rather smoky morning on campus where hopefully the fire is being put out. It was at Henry Cowell this morning.

Blumenthal: I heard that it's in the process of containment.

Reti: Okay. Scary.

Blumenthal: Exactly. But it isn't on campus and it's not threatening anything.

Reti: Right. Right. It's not on campus. We should be clear about that. Yes. So George, we're going to circle back today to talking about your research during your early years here at the astronomy board, as it was called then.

Blumenthal: I thought I'd start talking a little bit about teaching and then we'll get into research. When I showed up here, I knew I'd be teaching mostly graduate classes. I knew that there would be some college classes. I already talked about that phone call from John Faulkner.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: But they really wanted me to teach graduate classes. There were two reasons for that. One was kind of self-selected. I knew very little astronomy when I

arrived. You would be shocked at how little astronomy I knew. I had taken one course in my life. It was a quarter. It was a graduate course from Bill Mathews, as I was a graduate student. But there were elementary things that I didn't even have any idea about. I was remarkably clueless. When I showed up here, I didn't even know what the word "astrometry" meant, even though Santa Cruz had one of the strongest and most impressive astrometry programs in the world. Astrometry is the precise measurements of positions and velocities of stars. Lick Observatory had plates taken a hundred years earlier, and they were comparing them with pictures taken today. I don't know if it was a hundred years, but it was a long time earlier. That database made Lick a powerhouse for astrometry, which incidentally, in only fairly recent years has been overcome by the fact that the precision of measurements they can do today totally swamped the advantages of the long baseline.

Anyway, the first course I taught was a course on x-ray astronomy. This place was all about optical and infrared astronomy, mostly optical. One of the reasons they hired me was because of my knowledge of x-ray astronomy, which is kind of ironic, because it didn't take me that long to move out of the field. But I did know a lot about x-ray astronomy. And I was au courant because of my involvement with the Uhuru Group back in Boston.

So I taught that course. The first thing that struck me as really strange was the number of faculty that sat in on the course. I felt like I had half the faculty sitting in on the course because I was bringing something that wasn't here. It didn't intimidate me, but it did surprise me, because I'd never experienced anything like that before.

I really liked teaching, from the beginning. I kind of made a goal when I started that I wanted to teach every course in the astronomy department and every course in the physics department. I thought that would be a worthwhile goal to achieve.

Reti: Every course!

Blumenthal: Yeah. Because I figured if I could teach it, then I would understand it. And I wanted to understand everything.

Reti: Every undergraduate, and lower division?

Blumenthal: And graduate.

Reti: Wow. But you didn't.

Blumenthal: Of course, I didn't. It was completely unrealistic.

Reti: No. It would be impossible. (laughs) It's cool, though.

Blumenthal: But I didn't realize that at the time. I just thought it would be cool, because there's no better way to learn the material than to have to teach it. Of course, if you'd come to me ten or twenty years later and said, "We want you to teach this other course," I would have screamed bloody murder, just like everybody else. But I had that goal initially.

So I taught this course in x-ray astronomy and I learned a number of things about the place. First, I learned that we had some really bright graduate students. That was really good. I learned how out of the mainstream what I was teaching was in terms of what they knew. The other shocking thing that I learned, which was really much more pedagogical, was that I spent a fair amount of time in that course talking about statistics, and how you do measurements, and how secure those measurements are, how accurate they are, what the uncertainties of the measurements are. And it shocked me, just literally shocked me, that our students were ignorant of that issue, because most of the people here were observers and those issues transcend what kind of astronomy you do.

So over the next several decades, whenever I taught at the graduate level, I always made sure that I covered some aspect of statistics and measurements in that class. I also thought it was kind of a cool subject, even though I'm not an observer. But I thought it was helpful to students.

I think the next class I taught, they just kind of assigned me to, was a course called *High Energy Astrophysics*, another graduate class. And in those days, maybe not so true today, but in those days, "high-energy astrophysics" was a generic term that could mean almost anything. I interpreted it in those days as meaning anything interesting. (laughs)

Reti: Anything interesting, as opposed to boring astrophysics that is not high energy? (laughs)

Blumenthal: But seriously, there were conferences on high-energy astrophysics, and they covered a wide range of things. Today if I said "high-energy astrophysics," you would correctly think that that meant astrophysics either measuring high-energy radiation, like x-rays or gamma rays, or high-energy cosmic rays—some very, very high-energy phenomenon. In those days, it was more liberally interpreted. It included cosmology, the evolution of the universe. And since I'd always been interested in cosmology, at least when I first started teaching that class, I kind of taught it as two-thirds cosmology (because nobody else taught cosmology here), and one-third what I would call traditional high-energy astrophysics. I taught that course every other year—over time I evolved it into basically a cosmology course and changed its theme because I thought that was way too important to not give prominence in our curriculum.

Reti: Could I just stop you for one second?

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: So tell me, this is kind of a general question, but what do you love about teaching? Because a lot of people love research and you clearly love research as well.

Blumenthal: Well, that's a really good question. I love a few things about teaching. It's one of the reasons I'm teaching a class. By the way, you can come to my class if you want.

Reti: I'd love to.

Blumenthal: It's an upper-division class—

Reti: I might not understand that much of it.

Blumenthal: —but you're certainly welcome to come. Margaret will tell you when it is. I'm only teaching a couple of lectures this term.

Anyway, what do I love about teaching? A few things. First, I like the give and take of students. I love being in a class and even if I'm giving a straight lecture, I love it when students interrupt and ask questions, or disagree with me, or push me, or shove me. I love that intellectual give and take. I have my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and as a lecturer, but one of my strengths is my ability and willingness to take questions and engage in those discussions. I don't have an ego issue there. If some student gets up and shows that I'm completely wrong, I actually take that as a good thing. It means the students learn something, I've learned something, and I've corrected a mistake. And I don't like making mistakes. So it doesn't bother me at all. I really enjoy that give and take.

Sometimes students ask really, really deep questions. I'll give you an example. Another graduate course I've taught, and which I'll come back to in a minute, is *Electromagnetism and Plasma Physics*. And one day I'm happily in there, teaching away, and one of the students raised their hand (and this was vaguely relevant to what we were discussing), and asked me the question: why doesn't a microwave oven kill cockroaches? (laughs) The

question kind of stunned me. My first reaction to it was to question the hypothesis. It turns out a few students in the class had experience with this question. Apparently, a cockroach crawling through a microwave will survive a microwave oven being on, but a cockroach which is put in a cup of water or a cup of soup in a microwave will not survive, because they'll be burned to death, or be scalded to death.

Reti: Hmm, I think I'm changing my mind about lunch together today. (laughter)

Blumenthal: I had no reason to distrust their idea. My first reaction, I think, was actually the right one, but I wasn't at all sure of it, and that had to do with the dielectric properties of the shell of a cockroach. I think that actually is the right answer at this point because basically the shell, if it's sufficiently conductive on the outside, it will prevent the radiation from getting to the inside of the cockroach. But I also thought maybe the cockroaches were smart enough to go find the dead spots in the microwave, because microwaves have dead spots. But it was a question which I then turned into using it as a theme throughout the rest of the course. I asked several other people in the physics department what their answer to this was and it led to some really interesting discussions, although I never thought of writing an article on it, I have to admit, nor did I do the experiment.

Reti: Okay. (laughter)

Blumenthal: But that's the kind of thing I love, when students come up with something so out of left field that it just stops you in your tracks. I love doing things like that. And I love framing questions. Again, I'm getting ahead of myself about this electromagnetism course, but in that course, which is really dry stuff, really, really dry, I loved to put in things that made it more interesting. So, for example, a little section about—well, officially

it's about something called causality. That is, if I hit this table, it makes a sound, but you don't hear the sound before I hit the table. Kind of obvious, right?

Reti: Mm hmm.

Blumenthal: But if you work out what that means for certain media, for certain materials, that has profound implications. So instead of talking about it that way, the way I talked about it is, I posed a question to the class, which I love doing. My question was: why don't sunglasses let you see into the future? I then proceeded to prove to them that putting on a pair of sunglasses should let you see the future. Then I went through a longer argument about why that first argument was wrong, and that illustrated the point. I love doing stuff like that.

Reti: That would definitely wake me up in a class, yes. That question. Wow.

Blumenthal: It's a wrong proof, but it is a fairly convincing proof that sunglasses should let you see into the future.

Reti: Okay. Because of the way that they change light waves and how you're looking at them? I don't know if it's too much for us to get into.

Blumenthal: Well, I'll try to explain this in words, but it may not—

Reti: Oh, because it's more of a mathematical proof?

Blumenthal: It's really more of a mathematical thing. But what sunglasses do is they cut off a bunch of frequencies, right? So imagine you have white light that has all frequencies, in your garage, or outside, or wherever. You can think of this as all frequencies. Then you put on a pair of sunglasses. And what the sunglasses do is they cut out all but, say, optical frequencies. Everything else is removed from the signal. So what? Well, you can think of

a signal in terms of a series of frequencies. Or there's a mathematical way to transfer that into the time domain. So anything that has a series of frequencies can also be looked at in the time domain. And so what happens then is if, for example, you're sitting in a room, say, in a dark room, and first imagine that I put on a flashlight and then turn off the flashlight. So there's just a little signal and then nothing. Well, that's fine. If you divided it up into frequencies, it would have a broad range of frequencies. If you brought in and put on a pair of sunglasses, that cuts out most of the frequencies. And then transferred it back into the time domain, that signal would spread out and you'd get signal before the light switch was turned on.

Reti: Ah, okay.

Blumenthal: And that's why sunglasses let you see into the future.

Reti: Okay. Okay. I sort of get what you're saying.

Blumenthal: The fallacy in that argument is that there's a fundamental relationship that all media—lenses, glass, air, any medium at all—has to satisfy. And that fundamental condition comes from not allowing sunglasses to see into the future. That gives you a relationship between the absorption properties of the material and its refraction abilities. So if you know everything about the refraction abilities of a piece of glass, that all tells you everything you need to know about its absorption processes. Because that absorption has to be just the right amount to prevent you seeing into the future.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: So in words, that's kind of what— And I know it's just words, but—

Reti: No, no, I, well, I ask partially for the reader who may have more background than me who might be able to—

Blumenthal: But it's just the gist of it.

Reti: But also, I get the gist of it.

Blumenthal: So I enjoy doing stuff like that. I enjoy preparing for classes. I learn stuff a lot better when I know I have to teach it and stand up in front of an audience, rather than just go through it. So for me, it's an intellectual exercise and it's great exercise in terms of interacting with students.

I'm probably not the most skilled teacher in terms of lecturing. I'm sure I'm not, in fact. I think I'm adequate, but I don't think I'm great. I'm easygoing. I love being able to share things. I always taught from notes, and I always shared the notes with the students. My goal in life was for students not to take notes in class, but to listen. But of course, it's always been interesting to me, and it may not be so true today, but throughout my career, even when I'd give out in advance the notes that I'm going to use in lecture, students will still sit there, writing down notes. I'd keep saying to them, wouldn't you be better off taking my notes and scrawling a comment in the margin if you had to clarify it, rather than trying to just write down everything I said? And no, they won't. It's a strange thing. Students really feel the need to write down everything.

So I taught that course in cosmology for many years. I really enjoyed it. I guess two things to just say about it. Maybe three. I'll do the more intellectual one first: I also taught about how galaxies couldn't form. The issue of galaxy formation was something I'd been interested in since I was a grad student. I'll talk more about this later as well. But as a grad student, I'd read all kinds of papers on galaxy formation, and I was convinced that everything written was wrong. It couldn't possibly be right. So I cast it in that course as a proof that galaxies could not exist. It's a really good proof and that's how I would present it in class.

And, of course, the idea of the proof is that clearly something is wrong with that proof, but I had no idea what it was. I didn't know which step in that proof was wrong. I mean, there were potentially many, but I didn't have a good enough idea what was wrong that I was even willing to do research on the subject, because I just didn't know. But by keeping that issue alive for myself, that turned out to be prescient. So that was kind of one point.

A second point: I wrote up notes for that cosmology course that I kind of thought maybe I'd turn into a book. For years, students talked about how good those notes were, because I'd give them to students. But I never did. I never had the time to turn it into a book. I wish I had, but it's now past time, although I did write a couple of those chapters.

Then the third thing was just a funny memory. One of the years that I taught that class, one of the students was Steve Hawley, the astronaut. He's the guy who launched the Hubble space telescope. Steve was one of the funniest guys I ever met. That class was so hilarious. I was still pretty young, so he didn't view me as the old bitchy professor, right? (Reti laughs) When one day I was talking about something in cosmology in this room, there was a potato bug on the wall. It was crawling up the wall. The class was, of course, watching it. I wasn't paying any attention. I was aware it was there, but I wasn't paying any attention. But about two-thirds of the way up the wall, it suddenly fell off the wall and fell to the ground and didn't move. It just stayed there for the rest of the lecture. (Reti laughs)

So at the end of the lecture as we're all packing up, before the other students had left, Steve pipes up and says, "Okay, George, that was a one-potato bug lecture."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "It was just bad enough to kill one potato bug." (laughter)

The other thing I remember about Steve was, this was at the time of the Watergate hearings. I had the students do homework problems. So Steve came in one day and very loudly apologized and said, “I’m sorry. When you look at my homework, you’re going to see an eighteen-problem gap.” (laughs) You know, the eighteen-minute gap?

Reti: That was erased from Nixon’s tapes, yeah. (laughs) That’s funny.

Blumenthal: He also called me the special persecutor. (laughter) It made it fun. (laughs) So, yeah, so those were good. That course was always important to me.

And then, when the department was trying to figure out ways to make sure that our students had an adequate curriculum in physics, I designed a course on electromagnetism in plasma physics, which was a one-quarter course, rather than the usual two-quarter course they teach in physics. I pulled out the stuff that would really be of interest to astrophysics students and we worked out a deal that I would teach that course as one of the two quarters in the physics sequence, *and* as the only course in the astronomy sequence. I did that for many years. Again, I made notes. And on that one, I was pretty serious about doing a book of my notes. I put them all into LaTeX (a scientific typesetting program). I even talked to Dave Dorfan about doing a book together with him. But again, other things intervened and I never got around to it. But again, enjoyed it.

And I taught some undergraduate classes. Usually one of the 11, 12, 13 series. So that was pretty much what I taught for my department. I think I talked about college teaching already.

Reti: Yes, you did.

Blumenthal: So, research. My research kind of evolved. Well, let me start in the early days. When I came here, I’d been working on x-ray astronomy issues. I’d written some

articles on compact x-ray sources, sources that pulsate. Cygnus X-1, which turned out to be the first black hole discovered, was a strong x-ray source. I think the first major project that I did when I got here was I wrote an *Annual Review* article with Wally Tucker.

Then I decided to branch out a little bit. I wrote some papers on the Eddington limit, which is a limit on how much luminosity can come from an object without blowing everything in its vicinity away from it by radiation pressure. That radiation pressure kind of got me talking again to Bill Mathews. As I have said earlier, Bill and I would go bicycling every weekend. We almost always had lunch together at one of the coffee shops. Most of the faculty in astronomy, in the earliest days, would bring their lunch and eat it out on the lawn, but Bill and I would go to a coffeeshop, more often Stevenson than anything else.

Bill started working on radiation pressure near active galaxies and since I had done this work on the Eddington limit, we started talking. So we started writing some papers on emission lines from active galaxies. That was really interesting work. We showed that just the pressure of radiation near a quasar would cause a high enough velocity to give you the breadth of the emission lines that are observed. You see that because breadth of the emission line is due to the velocity of the gas. But how does that gas get such high velocity? We had an explanation for it. Then we realized gravity could do it as well. But we made some predictions about the shape of these lines, which turned out to be correct. Turns out gravity also gives the same prediction, so not quite as impressive as it sounds.

And then we thought hard about the question about stability of gas near active galaxies and we wrote some papers on instabilities in that gas and showed that there were certain conditions that had to be present in quasars for there to be emission lines. I think those were important.

Reti: Can I ask you what an active galaxy is?

Blumenthal: Oh, I'm sorry. You kind of know what a galaxy is, like a spiral galaxy?

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: Some galaxies have a very bright core right at the center, which today we know is a black hole that's consuming gas. So the thing in the center can be relatively weak, like the black hole in the center of our galaxy. It's not an active galaxy, but the black hole is there. Or it could be a quasar, which is the brightest kind of object in the universe, with a luminosity from the very core of the galaxy which is 100 times bigger than all of the hundred billion stars in that galaxy combined. So they're powerful engines in the very centers of galaxies. So that's what we were working on. It was interesting stuff.

And then, I love this little paper. I'm not sure it was widely appreciated. But Bill is a hydrodynamicist. He's one of the best in the world. He understands how gas flows. I'm not really a hydrodynamicist, but I know a lot about relativity, both special and general relativity, and about radiation theory. Anyway, there was an issue that had long puzzled me—I had seen a paper on general relativity and accretion and winds by a guy at Rice University. It was a very nice concept for a paper.

Just, let me back up. The sun—just forget relativity for a moment—our sun is a star. It has enough energy in its outer areas that gas blows off the outer parts of the sun. It's known as the solar wind. It's like the sun blows a little wind into the solar system. You may have even read about it in recent years, because it was just a year or two ago that they discovered where the solar wind interfaces with the medium between stars, the interstellar medium. That was only discovered a couple of years ago, by I think the Viking 1 spacecraft, which has now left the solar system.

We've always known about winds, and long ago people did mathematical solutions, hydrodynamic, of the gas flow in a wind, so people understood it fairly well. And this guy

at Rice, Kurt Michael, wrote a paper where he generalized that to show what a wind would look like in general relativity. I read his paper. I knew Kurt, and I talked to him about it, but I just did not understand his paper. What I didn't understand is why there were no critical points, whatever those things are, in his solutions. It puzzled me and puzzled me and puzzled me, and I had no idea how to resolve it. One day Bill and I were talking, and I mentioned this problem to him. And it was really interesting, because Bill knows a lot about gas, knows very little about relativity—just the opposite from me. Somehow we put our heads together and we figured out how to do the wind solution correctly. The key thing that Bill brought to it that I hadn't appreciated was—again, this is technical—but it's that the equation of state is crucial and you need an equation of state that spans between highly relativistic and non-relativistic regions. Equation of state is just a descriptor of the gas.

So once we realized that, or once I realized that, then to me it was straightforward to get the solution in relativity. I remember I even decided I wanted to figure out what shock waves would look like in that gas. That I struggled with. That was even a little bit funny because I came up with solutions; I figured out how to do the shock waves, and then I ended up with some equations which I couldn't solve. Well, I mean, I guess I could solve them, but they were just so goddamned complicated. (Reti laughs)

And so, this was the time when computer people were just coming out with the very first programs that did algebraic manipulation.

Reti: Oh, so this was when, mid-seventies?

Blumenthal: Yeah, it was the mid-seventies. I had access to one of those programs. It wasn't Mathematica; I don't know that Mathematica had arrived yet, or that we had it. It was one of the precursors to Mathematica, but I did have access to it. So I programmed

this up in whatever that language was, and I turned the crank of the computer, and what came out was a solution that was about ten pages long. (laughter) It was awful! It was huge. It was completely not understandable. I was completely confused, because I just didn't think it should be that hard. So I puzzled about it and puzzled about it. I remember I went to Bill Burke, who was another faculty member. He was a specialist in relativity. I asked him about it, and we talked. And it was actually while talking to him that the answer suddenly came to me. There was a trivial solution to that equation that I could guess. Once I guessed that solution, I could kind of divide it out. And once I divided it out, it so simplified the equations that I could solve them by hand. (laughs) And so—not that this was an earthshattering piece of work—it's just that it was so satisfying to actually solve this problem. I thought it was fun.

It was soon thereafter that I switched over to thinking about galaxies and structure formation.

But let me stick in a couple of other things, since they're in my notes here. One is that like any scientist, I gave talks. Some of the talks I enjoyed giving in those early years were to schools. I visited a bunch of schools. I remember visiting Watsonville Elementary School. I would give talks to little kids.

Reti: And how did that happen?

Blumenthal: Somebody asked me and I said fine.

Reti: Was that unusual for faculty at the time?

Blumenthal: I have no idea, to be honest with you. I think that there were always people asking for such things. But I tended to enjoy doing it, so I did. It was really fun. I would go out and I would talk to kids in kindergarten or grade school.

Reti: About astronomy.

Blumenthal: About astronomy, yeah. I'd show them some slides. I always had fun. When we got to Pluto, I showed them a picture of Mickey Mouse's dog.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: It was fun. But I'd get these funny questions, especially with younger kids. They don't ask you the most relevant questions. "What did you eat for breakfast?" But those were fun. I just wanted to mention that, because it was something I enjoyed doing. I still enjoy doing it. Again, this is an aside. But I was just in India. I visited a high school, but it turns out it was attached to an elementary school. I visited the kindergarten class and I met with all the kindergarteners and I had them ask me questions. It was fun. It was so much fun. We even had companies come to us and ask for speakers. I enjoyed doing that, too. I was always amazed that I could go to some shipping company and give a talk on the early universe and they actually appreciated and enjoyed it.

Reti: Was this coming through Lick Observatory or through the department?

Blumenthal: I think probably through Lick. We got a lot of speaker requests.

Reti: Did you ever talk on the mountain [Mount Hamilton]?

Blumenthal: No, I actually never did. I was asked to several times, but I never did do that. After the first few times of going up the mountain—well, let me talk about going up the mountain a little bit later.

So Lick is on Mount Hamilton. I did go up the mountain a few times with classes. If I was teaching a lower-division class, I would make sure we brought them up the mountain. That was fine. We also had an annual picnic on top of the mountain as well. The

astronomy department, I guess everyone at Lick was invited, so it was a relatively large picnic. Those picnics ended at a certain point, but they used to do it.

One year, though, was just absolutely memorable, at least for me, it was personally memorable. There were two other astronomy faculty on my floor. One was Doug Keeley, who had come from Caltech. Both of them had been there much longer than me. Doug Keeley studied stars and masers, interstellar masers and things like that. And Doug Keeley was one of these physical fitness freaks like you've never met. I mean, muscular, aerobically fit. The story is, I heard the story that he once ran a relay race from Capitola to Santa Cruz, but he couldn't get anyone to run with him on the team, so he did it alone. And he won.

Reti: Wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: The other person on the floor was Jeff Scargle. Jeff was not out of shape, but he was not particularly in shape. I'm not sure he did much. Anyway, Doug Keeley broke his leg on campus when he was bicycling down the hill off campus one day. So he was in a cast, I mean, a big cast, for a long time. Then they made it into a smaller cast. And he was in that cast for a long time, because I took him to the doctor a couple of times. He wasn't married. He and Doug were always kidding each other, so one of the other challenged the other to a bicycle race up Mount Hamilton.

Reti: With the cast on?

Blumenthal: With the cast on.

Reti: Good God. (laughter)

Blumenthal: So it was arranged for that picnic that they would have a bicycle race up Mount Hamilton. And since they were racing up Mount Hamilton, I decided I'd bike up

Mount Hamilton, too, but I didn't want to race. It turns out Peter Scott from physics was there that day, too. So Peter also biked up the mountain. I don't know if you know Peter.¹¹¹

Reti: I do know Peter.

Blumenthal: It's funny. Peter doesn't remember this anymore. But it is true. I think it was Bill Burke who drove all of us to the base of the mountain. We didn't bicycle over from Santa Cruz. We drove to somewhere in San Jose and then we all got on our bikes and started bicycling. I wasn't going to race. I'm not a racer type person. Peter and I had this, I think very pleasant, but slow ride up the mountain. But the other two took off. It took us a couple of hours to bike up the mountain.

Reti: Well, yeah. That's a serious bike ride.

Blumenthal: So we get up to the top. The first thing I see is Jeff Scargle lying down on this huge concrete slab just totally exhausted. (laughter) So I went over to him, and asked him if he was okay. He said yeah. I said, "Well, who won?" He said, "Doug did. Doug got here an hour before me." What Doug had done is he had strapped his leg into a pedal and basically used one leg to pedal. (laughs)

Reti: Oh, my God. Unbelievable.

Blumenthal: Yeah, it was quite memorable. So those were the trips up the mountain. As time went on, I was less inclined to go, partly because I wasn't as closely aligned to Lick as many of the other people were, partly because by that time I was married. I think Kelly went up to the mountain once, and that was quite enough for her. She gets carsick, so it would take a lot to induce her to go up to the mountain again. I've been up there more recently. I've gone to several events as chancellor up there, but Kelly has not joined me.

Reti: And you wanted to make sure to talk about your wood shop story.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. Actually, I love this story. So when I started, there was, in Nat Sci II, on the first floor of Nat Sci II, was the campus woodshop, which is now located in one of those temporary buildings across the street, kind of near the Lick shops. But in those days, it was located on the first floor of Nat Sci II, with an entrance right opposite the elevators. So opposite the elevator in Nat Sci II, there were two humongous double doors, and behind them was the campus woodshop. It had been there for many years. And in fact, as a little aside, there was a tiny little room even behind the woodshop, and that's where the campus stored its radioactive cobalt source.

Reti: Which was used what, in computers?

Blumenthal: I think somewhere in biology.

Reti: Oh, for the labs.

Blumenthal: And interestingly enough, when people stopped using the cobalt source, the campus didn't know what to do with it, so they just left it there because the cost of disposing of it was far worse than the cost of just keeping it there. I have no idea whether it's still there. I have no idea whatsoever. But this is not something you want to mess around with. But anyway, that was an aside.

So, they had this woodshop. Somehow the powers that be in the university decided that the woodshop was going to move, and so that space was going to open up. There would be a little bit of money to convert that space, so they gave it to astronomy. So Joe Calmes, who was kind of the assistant director to Lick Observatory at the time—somehow I got roped into being the person to work with him to design—I think the department decided to make it into a seminar room, where we could hold Friday seminars where we ate lunch and stuff. I was roped into help design that room. Designing a room is not a big deal, but we had to figure out where the screen goes. We were going to get a fancy projector and

stuff and maybe some new furniture, thin little tables so you could eat lunch at the table while you listened to a talk. This didn't seem too horrendous a thing to do. So we designed up the room and got it all done. I thought my contribution was ended when we submitted the plan to the campus.

But the plans came back rejected. They were rejected by the fire marshal. The fire marshal objected because a room that had that capacity—and the capacity was probably on the order of eighty to hundred people, I don't remember exactly—that capacity requires there to be two entrances to the room separated by more than X feet. And the two big double doors were separated by *less* than X feet.

So the fire marshal and the campus facilities people decided that what they needed to do, was they needed to cut a hole in the wall at in the front of the room and put a door there as a third exit, which I thought was the dumbest idea in the world, because that door would lead into the CCD lab, whereas we already had two doors that led to the outside.

Reti: Right, right. So then you'd just have another problem.

Blumenthal: If you were in a fire, are you going to go into the CCD lab or are you going to go outside? I thought it was just really dumb. Furthermore, the CCD lab didn't want a door into their lab. I thought this was so ridiculous.

I talked to Joe and we decided we would just appeal that decision. There was some appellate mechanism on campus. I have no idea what it was. So we appealed the decision and went away. A few weeks later, it came back and the appeal was denied. I was furious. I thought this was the dumbest thing I'd ever seen in my life. Remember, I wasn't chancellor yet.

Reti: Of course not. (laughs) This is when are we talking about, roughly, the 1980s?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Roughly eighties. I sat there and I stared at those plans. Then I had a brilliant idea, just a brilliant idea. I pointed it out to Joe Calmes¹¹² and he agreed to put it forward. My brilliant idea was we don't build a third door, we just leave the room as it was. But instead of having two double doors, we close off the inner part of each of the two double doors so that there's only one single door in two different places. But if you close off the inner parts of the doors, then the two outer doors are more than X feet apart, therefore they comply with the fire regulations. So, by making egress from the room more difficult, we complied with the regulations. We submitted that plan to the campus. And would you believe it? They approved it with no comments. So if you go over there today, that room still has just two single doors and not two double doors.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: I mean, can you believe it?

Reti: Yeah, that's crazy. Sometimes, yeah, the bureaucracy gets insane.

Blumenthal: Well after that, somebody said to me, "You're really good at this. You should be chancellor." (laughter)

Reti: You said, "Come back in ten years."

Blumenthal: No, no, no, I didn't. I thought that was the most ridiculous idea I'd ever heard. (laughs) I never thought I would be a chancellor. Never. Nor did I want to. So anyway, that was the woodshop story. It turned out to be a very useful room. We used it for many years.

So I think I told the story of becoming department chair at that time when I was at Harvard and getting the call.

Anyway, so I came back from sabbatical and this had to be around 1994, roughly, give or take, to become department chair. Little did I know that I would do it for six years.

Reti: That's a really long term, isn't it?

Blumenthal: Well, they kind of figure three years is a term.

Reti: So, you did it for two terms.

Blumenthal: And many of the cast of characters were different when I got back. For example, the department manager was somebody whom I'd never met before. She was really good, Diane Matus. I enjoyed working with her, although she did retire within a couple of years, so I had to hire her replacement. Natalie Batalha came back to graduate school then.¹¹³ She had been a graduate student here before she got married, and then dropped out of graduate school to go to Brazil with her soon-to-be husband, and spent several years in Brazil. Then she applied to come back to graduate school, which was so unusual for someone who'd dropped out. Most people who drop out of grad school never come back, even if they think they're going to do it. Natalie did, and when she came back, she was very successful. Now we just hired her on the faculty. She's the one who's one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world for 2017.

I remember that time also, because her husband had no role, no position. He'd been doing some work at Berkeley, but I remember I went and got him a computer account and various other things just to make it a little easier for them. She was also very grateful to me because in 1989—so this must have been while she was here the first time or something, unless I got the years wrong, after the earthquake.

The Loma Prieta Earthquake

The Loma Prieta earthquake happened in fall of 1989. That day I was very, very lazy. It was around five o'clock or so, and I was coming back from somewhere. I went to my office and I rode the elevator up to the third floor.¹¹⁴

Reti: Oh, no!

Blumenthal: So, I was caught in the elevator when the Loma Prieta earthquake hit. I was alone. The power went off, so there were no lights in the elevator. Meanwhile, the building's claxons were claxoning, or whatever that's called.

Reti: What's a claxon?

Blumenthal: [Makes booming noise]

Reti: Oh, the alarm?

Blumenthal: Yeah, it was an alarm, but it wasn't like a siren alarm. It was just loud horns making all kinds of noise. And there I was, inside of this thing. It was like being inside of a malted milk machine when it's going. It was throwing me against the walls.

Reti: Literally?

Blumenthal: Literally. Literally. I was like a ragdoll in there, being thrown against the wall.

Reti: Oh, my God, how terrifying.

Blumenthal: Well, the good news is that I don't suffer from claustrophobia. That's the good news. There are people I've told this story to who can't even hear it. But the bad news is, I was stuck in there alone. I was terrified that the cable in the elevator would break and

I'd come crashing down. I had no idea where I was. And the joke was on me, because it turns out it was a hydraulic elevator. You could take an axe to a hydraulic elevator and it would just slowly descend. But I didn't know that.

So I was in that elevator trying to figure out if the cable broke, whether or not I would be better off standing, jumping, lying on my back, or lying on my stomach. I eliminated lying on my stomach as a reasonable alternative, but I couldn't quite decide whether I was better off standing, or lying on my back. I was trying to puzzle that out throughout the—

Reti: How long were you in there?

Blumenthal: About forty-five minutes. At a certain point, I realized that there was a phone. So I picked up the phone and it worked. Somebody on campus, some campus operator somewhere answered the phone. I was very grateful to be in touch with another human being. I said, "What the hell happened? Was that an earthquake?"

Her response was, "Where have you been?"

Reti: (laughter) Oh, my God. So you couldn't actually feel the earthquake. You knew because the claxon thing was throwing you around so much, you didn't—yeah, you probably couldn't discern what was the claxon, what was going on.

Blumenthal: I wasn't sure what was going on. I guessed it was an earthquake, and I guessed it was a big one.

Reti: Yeah. I've heard a lot of earthquake stories in my career. It's one of those flash points. But I've never heard one like that. Wow.

Blumenthal: So I'm in there. She finally said to me, "Just stay on the line." So I'm in there waiting, trying to—

Reti: Like you were going to hang up, right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: —I'm trying to figure out what the hell am I doing? Do I stand up? Do I lie down? There wasn't much I could do. I also debated whether or not I should try to crawl out the emergency hatch. But this was a freight elevator, and so the false roof was at normal roof height, but I knew above the false roof there was another roof to the elevator that was pretty high up. A, I wasn't sure I could climb up there. And B, I wasn't sure I wanted to, given that there might be aftershocks.

Then the first aftershock hit. The first aftershock was a 6.0 earthquake. Loma Prieta was about 7.0 or 7.1. The first aftershock was a 6.0, and that's pretty hefty as well. That made me really glad that I hadn't tried to climb up.

Meanwhile, the woman gets back on the phone. She says, "So, what's your name?" I told her. She said, "Are you listed in the phone directory?" I said yeah. And she said, "Okay, hang on." I realized that this was to notify my next of kin.

Reti: (laughter) Oh my God.

Blumenthal: So I just waited. About forty-five minutes later, suddenly the lights came up. And the claxons were still claxoning.

Reti: You were still being thrown back and forth?

Blumenthal: No, no, no. The throwing back and forth was only during the earthquake and during the aftershock. The intermediate period it was just fine. It was very quiet, quiet in terms of motion. Not in terms of claxons, which were driving me nuts.

The lights just came on. So I kind of said, what the hell. I pushed 1. The elevator went down to 1 and the doors opened. I kind of thought there would be cheering crowds and bands playing. (Reti laughs) There was *nobody* there.

Reti: Everybody had left the building.

Blumenthal: Everybody had left the building. The elevator's on the outside.

Reti: Oh, yeah, at Nat Sci II.

Blumenthal: It's opposite the woodshop.

Reti: And, of course, that was one of the buildings that was damaged.

Blumenthal: It was by far the most seriously damaged building on campus. Anyway, the door opened. I went outside. Then I realized I shouldn't leave them hanging. So I went back in the elevator, carefully holding the door open, and told whoever it was on the phone that I was fine and they could take me off their worry list.

Then I went home. Kelly, my wife, was at home. We had two kids by then. She'd had a pretty normal experience. She felt the earthquake. She said she took it seriously when she started hearing glass breaking, because then she knew it was serious. So she grabbed the kids and ran outside, and then realized that running outside was not the right thing to do. So she ran back inside and found a doorway to stand in, or something like that. So she was fine.

So finally I walked in. I said, "Hey, Kelly, I have the best excuse ever for being late for dinner." We were okay. We lost a chimney, but most houses in Santa Cruz lost their chimneys.

It was kind of strange, actually. When I got home, I think we called both of our mothers. We were able to do that, but shortly thereafter, all phone service to Santa Cruz stopped. And how we got through—

Reti: It was weird that way, yeah.

Blumenthal: Then there was no electricity. The electricity was out. For a while, we had no water, either. We also had a smell in the house, which it turned out was a broken drainage pipe. But other than that, everyone was fine. I mean, this isn't deep, but we had an earthquake preparedness kit with water and all this stuff in our garage in a cabinet. However, the cabinet was right next to the door from the kitchen to the garage. It had fallen over and blocked the door so we couldn't get into the garage. We couldn't get into the garage from the outside because our cars were in the garage, and the electric garage door was closed and there was no electricity.

Reti: Something for people to think about when they are doing earthquake preparedness, right.

Blumenthal: We couldn't get into the garage at all.

Reti: And you were living—

Blumenthal: On Escalona Drive. The other thing was we had put a second story a few years earlier on our house. One of the rooms that we put up on the second story was a study for Kelly, and very well-constructed. We even put in a hugely thick sound wall because she used to type on an old typewriter. Remember what a typewriter was? (chuckles)

Reti: I *do* remember typewriters. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yeah, well, she was one of these people that could type so fast it made you nervous listening to her type. We put in soundproofing so I wouldn't have to listen to her typing while I was asleep. We put in soundproofing so I wouldn't have to listen to her typing while I was asleep. So it was well built. But in her study, which was a relatively small study but had long walls, she had shelves from ceiling to floor. Every book had fallen off of her bookshelves. Her study was literally chest-high in books. You couldn't even open the door. It took me a few days to get into her study. I literally had to push the door open enough to get my hand in, and then I started throwing books across the room. I kept throwing books across the room until I cleared out enough space for the door to open.

But our immediate problem was we had two kids in diapers. We were almost out of diapers. So the next day they opened Safeway to like five customers at a time. There was a long line. It was blocks long. I stood in that line for many, many hours. Everybody else in line was buying water and batteries. Those were the two big commodities. I didn't care about water. I didn't care about batteries. I wanted diapers. I bought a bunch of diapers and brought them home. It's relevant to the story about Natalie because—I actually didn't remember this until Natalie reminded me of this quite recently—but a few days later, Natalie and I ran into each other and she said she was out of diapers. I had bought a bunch of them. So I gave her a bunch of diapers and she always remembered that. I guess when somebody gives you diapers, you remember it.

Reti: (laughs) That's a great story.

Blumenthal: Nat Sci II became uninhabitable. In fact, we now know that Nat Sci II came within seconds of completely collapsing. Nat Sci II became the poster child of how not to build a building in earthquake country. It was exacerbated by the fact that Nat Sci II was a very long, thin building and the axis of the earthquake, or the motion of the earthquake, was perpendicular to the building. So it was the worst possible orientation.

The reason it was such a bad building is that it was concrete, and the concrete pillars supported concrete floors, but the concrete floors were just laid on the concrete pillars. During the earthquake, they shook back and forth. Concrete on concrete doesn't do well. There was not the equivalent of like K-Y jelly or something.

Reti: Yeah, something that would be a flexible joint.

Blumenthal: Yes. There were huge rocks that fell off those pillars, where the floors connected to the pillars. Rocks of concrete. I think I even saved one. Somewhere I have one of those big chunks still. I saved it as a souvenir. So the building was uninhabitable, and they wouldn't let us back in for literally weeks. But I was teaching.

Reti: In that building.

Blumenthal: In that building. And it was a real pain because I was teaching in a seminar room, which was not controlled by the registrar, so the registrar felt no obligation to get me a space to teach. The dean's office was no help. So, somebody suggested I teach in Sinsheimer [Labs]. They have these little areas next to every stairwell that are kind of carved out areas. They use them for coffee lounges. I asked them if I could use one of those. They said no.

I finally got desperate, and I said to hell with it. I had my class go to one of those places. I set up a blackboard and brought in some chairs. I just taught my class until we could move back into Nat Sci II, several weeks, or maybe a month or two.

So then they propped up the cement floors. The first thing they did is they brought in people with these chainsaws and they chainsawed holes in the walls throughout the building. And they brought in these humongous four by four chunks of wood, which they pounded in place to prop up the floors. They did that in every office throughout the

building. So they basically destroyed all the walls to put in those four by fours. Then they said it was okay to move back in.

Well, no, I'll even go back a step. Before we were able to move back in, they finally said we could go back into our offices for no more than twenty minutes to get material if we signed a waiver. I remember, I just didn't know what to do. So I called Kelly, who's after all a lawyer. I said, "What the hell should I do? With these waivers of liability, I'm saying the university won't be liable if a building falls on my head."

She said, "Don't worry about it, just sign it." She said, "Those waivers are not worth their weight in paper. They're not worth anything." So I signed the waiver, went back in my office, and discovered that my office was flooded, because we still had the problem with the roof— And it had rained since then. Water was everywhere. It was awful, just a complete wreck. Every book was off my shelves. My computer was sopping wet. It was awful in there.

I got what I could quickly salvage, I was mostly interested in my notes, and got out of there. The irony is, later I saw Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs, Wendell Brase. I like Wendell a lot, I really do, and I still have a really good relationship with him today. But at the time, I was really angry at him. I said, "Wendell, you know, I went back in the building and signed one of your waivers. My wife, who is a lawyer and told me they're not enforceable."

He says, "I know that."

I said, "What do you mean, you know that?"

He says, "Yeah, I knew that."

I said, "So why are you making us sign this?"

He said, “I wanted people to know how serious it was.” I kind of understand it. He wanted people to not take it too lightly.

It took us weeks before we could move back into the building. Then when we moved back into the building—this was so funny— (laughs) they decided to bring in the structural engineers who had said we should pound in these four-by-fours. They gave this big talk to the occupants of the building about why the building was safe. Oh, my God, was that a big mistake because they didn’t know who they were talking to. They were talking to a bunch of physicists. Dave Dorfan tore them to shreds, literally. Dave was so much smarter than they were. Dave thinks about things. Dave is a practical, smart guy, so he asked them questions. The main questions were about the stability of these four by fours that they had pounded in place and how could they be sure that they wouldn’t be displaced if there were another earthquake.

Reti: We were still getting aftershocks for months after the quake.

Blumenthal: Yes, we were still getting aftershocks. Yep. So they said no, no, they had done good calculations of the building's stability, they were sure. He asked them, “Well, have you done dynamic modeling?” which means taking your model and shaking it, basically, mathematically. They said no, no, that wasn’t necessary. They were sure it was fine.

Well by golly, that night after that talk, there was an aftershock and all of the four-by-fours moved.

Reti: (gasps)

Blumenthal: They didn't move a lot, but they clearly moved. So they did another quick study. They decided that they had to come in, and they had to pound them back into place, and that they had to put in braces to brace the four-by-fours, so that they wouldn't move.

We're being sidetracked a little bit. But this does relate to department chair a little bit, as you'll see.

Reti: Okay. Well, and this is an important part of UCSC history.

Blumenthal: So then they came in to give us another seminar because by then, people were afraid because they had so blown it the first time. And in fact, a number of staff people had come to me and said they didn't want to move back in. I was not the chair. They just came to me because I talk to people. Stan Woosley was the chair. So they arranged another seminar to reassure the staff, and they brought the president of the engineering company in. He still didn't understand that he was talking to the Dave Dorfans of this world. He came in and he talked about why it was safe. Dave Dorfman is talking, starts asking him questions about whether they'd tested the rebar. The concrete building has a lot of rebar in it and rebar has little ridges on it. Basically, Dave's question was: has the rebar moved so that it's reamed out the concrete, so that it's basically not serving the role of reinforcing the concrete anymore? It's just some chunk of metal inside some concrete. It's kind of like putting a pipe cleaner through a pipe. You do it enough times and the pipe cleaner doesn't have any rigidity.

They were doing a terrible job answering the question. The campus facilities people, including Frank Zwart, were there at this meeting. It was really awful. After the meeting, more staff came to me and complained to me that they didn't feel safe. I wasn't worried, I have to admit. Partly I wasn't worried because I was still young, and young people don't worry about things. Partly I wasn't worried because I thought the probability of an

earthquake was pretty low. And partly I wasn't worried because I just don't believe in worrying in life. I think you take precautions, but don't go to extremes. Wear seatbelts, but don't be afraid to drive, is kind of my attitude in life. But a lot of people were worried. There were people who were talking about quitting their jobs if they had to go be in that building.

Meanwhile, people in physics particularly, but also some in astronomy, were saying, this is ridiculous. We need to bring in another firm to confirm that this building is safe. They approached the campus administration and they refused. They said, "This is a legitimate firm," which it was, actually, but we didn't necessarily know or trust that at the time. So we were all having these discussions. Finally, a bunch of us got together and we decided that the status quo was not adequate. We couldn't let the status quo continue, and since the university had refused to bring in another firm, we would have to just take a pool and each contribute some money and hire another firm to come in and do an independent analysis.

I called Frank Zwart, who I knew, and was friends with, and told Frank what was going on.¹¹⁵ I basically said to Frank, "Look, this is bad. It's bad that there isn't enough confidence of people in this firm." He said, "It's a legitimate firm." I believed him and I still believe him, but the performance by the leadership of that firm did not instill confidence. *You're* a staff person. Imagine you're in a seminar where you've got this physics professor, Dave Dorfan—and there were others, too, but Dave was the leader of the pack— And Dave is really smart and he's asking very sensible questions and not getting straight answers from the president of this engineering firm who, for all I know, he hadn't done real engineering work for years. I don't know. But in any event, even if he was doing engineering work, he was not intellectually capable of going toe-to-toe with

Dave Dorfan. So you're a staff person; you're listening to this argument, which you don't understand, but the body language is clear.

Reti: Yeah. For sure, I'd be worried about: do you want to risk your life to keep this job?

Blumenthal: Exactly.

Reti: How much is it worth it?

Blumenthal: Exactly. So they were worried and I think it was perfectly legitimate.

Reti: We were all traumatized by the earthquake anyway, so you're talking about a lot of people with PTSD, essentially, who are getting completely freaked out.

Blumenthal: Yes, although in those days, I wouldn't have even known what the words PTSD meant.

Reti: We weren't using that language, but that was what was going on.

Blumenthal: So I told this to Frank. I said, "Look, Frank, you've got to get them to think about this again. This would be terrible. If we take a pool—and we are serious about doing this, we're going to do it—if we take a pool of money and go hire an outside firm: A, it looks really bad that we can't trust the university enough to assure our safety. And B, what if they come in with a report that differs from the original report?"

Reti: The media storm would be ugly.

Blumenthal: I said, "So you've got to just do it."

So he went off. He said, "I'll see what I can do." Frank's a good guy and somehow he made it happen. So physics was somewhat surprised—again, I never told them my role in this, to get a call—maybe it was from Frank. I don't know who it was from. But basically saying

yes, they will agree to an independent analysis, and that the physics department could choose the firm.

So physics people put their heads together and they did a lot of studying to figure out which firm to bring in. They wanted to get the best. I wasn't a party to any of that. They chose a firm. To make a long story short, the other firm came in. They did a detailed study and they concluded the same thing as the first firm, that it was safe. But now people actually believed it. And from my perspective, giving people the confidence that they could believe it, even if it didn't ultimately change anything, that was still worth it.

I think for a lot of staff, it was still very difficult. Because here we're telling them one day, we're not sure whether this building is safe. Then the next day we're saying oh, yeah, it's safe. They didn't see any work taking place between those two times, because there was no work. It was simply an independent analysis of the structure of the building.

So I'm going to keep this chain of the story going, because it impacts being department chair over a period of years. So we stayed in Nat Sci II for a long time, because unbeknownst to all of us, the campus had applied to FEMA for support to fix the building. And somehow FEMA lost the campus's paperwork.

Reti: Oh, God.

Blumenthal: So we just stayed there for a couple of years, doing our thing, living with these— They installed, I'm sorry, at a certain point (and I missed this in the story), at a certain point, they installed something better than the pounded in four-by-fours. They installed some kind of metal braces inside the building on very floor that served the purpose of the four-by-fours, but they were metal and they were connected to the concrete over, concrete floor things, with something that was, I think of it as K-Y jelly, just because that's a lubricant. Some kind of lubricant that would let it slip. That was fine. It was still a

temporary solution. They hadn't fixed the walls. But at least it was a temporary solution. That's where we stayed for several years. We didn't know that the application from FEMA had been lost. But at a certain point, none other than Mike Nauenberg got it into his head—

Reti: (laughs) The characters are—

Blumenthal: —that something was not right here. So he started pushing very hard to figure out what was happening. That's how they discovered that the campus' application to FEMA was lost. He started lobbying that something needed to be done to fix the building.

Finally, whoever was the administration—it must have been the Pister administration at that point—decided that they would have to advance the money to at least do the planning for fixing the building. There ensued then a major debate about whether you fix the building with an endoskeleton or an exoskeleton. The exoskeleton, which ultimately was chosen, is what you see today. Basically, a skeleton on the outside of the building designed to keep it from moving sideways. That's the main purpose of it. Because that was the vulnerability of the building. An earthquake going the long way of the building wasn't really a very serious thing, because there's a long baseline for the building. It's pretty stable that way. It was the fact that the earthquake hit sideways. It's like a boat getting hit by a wave. If a boat gets hit by a wave while it's bow-on, that's not a big deal. In a hurricane, that's how you're supposed to deal with the large waves, by meeting them bow-on. But if a boat gets hit by a huge wave sideways, that's when boats capsize.

Reti: And the same thing, I think, with airplanes, right? Sheer?

Blumenthal: Yeah, that's right. So with an earthquake, you don't want the wave to come in sideways. You want it to come in the long way in a building.

So finally, it was decided, once Soc Sci I was built (I think by then College Eight must have been built as well, because College Eight was no longer in Kerr) to move all of the physics and astronomy faculty and students into this building, Kerr Hall, because it was going to be temporarily empty because the plan was to move the chancellor here. So we could move all the physics and astronomy faculty here while they rebuilt Nat Sci II. They decided against the interior fix, the endoskeleton, because it was too hard, they had to get into too many walls, and it would take up too many square feet inside the building. It would reduce the size of the building significantly. So that's why they decided to go with the exoskeleton, which is ugly, but which is very functional.

Reti: Great. Thank you. I never have understood that whole trajectory.

Blumenthal: The other reason they didn't want to do the exoskeleton was they were afraid people would climb on it.

Reti: I've never seen anybody climbing on that thing.

Blumenthal: I've never seen anyone doing it, either. And it also strikes me as a limit to what you can limit people from doing. I mean, I remember one of the first lunches with my colleagues at Santa Cruz. We went to lunch somewhere. And when we came back to Nat Sci II, Bill Burke, who was one of the most athletic people you'd ever want to meet, Bill, who was a rock climber, came up to the building just on a lark.¹¹⁶ The building had little ridges in it. He stuck his fingers in the ridges and he started climbing up the building, kind of like Spiderman.

Reti: Like it was a crevasse. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yes. I remember watching him in amazement because that was something I could not have conceived of doing. I just had no idea that a human being could do what

he was doing. But he did. He was very athletic. He was thin, athletic, muscular, and he did a lot of stuff like that.

Moving Astronomy/Lick to Kerr Hall

So they decided to move us out. By the time they decided to move us out of Nat Sci II, I was chair. I was petrified that this was going to cause a revolution. My faculty, I thought, were going to revolt at moving into Kerr Hall.

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: I didn't know. This was a bunch of social scientists over here [at Kerr Hall]. It was a building for social scientists, not for scientists. I don't know. I was just vaguely aware that this was going to be a major change in culture. People were going to be on different floors. We were going to spread out over all four floors of a building. They were used to being on one floor, with only three of us on a different floor. Well, we had spread out a little bit more than that. But still, I had a feeling that change was not going to be easy. And there were special facilities. There was a room where they kept plates. There were these plates that were so valuable and stuff.

Reti: Glass plates, you mean? Image plates.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I'm not sure we had so many, I mean, there was the CCD lab stuff. I just thought it was going to be horrendous. I wasn't going to worry about the CCD lab because that was the Lick people who had to worry about that. I thought the physics people would be complaining bitterly because their labs would have to move. So, I just thought it was going to be tough. I wasn't worried about physics. They could take care of themselves. I thought it was going to be awful.

So the first thing that happened was, I was going to go over there to inspect Kerr. I went over with Sandy Faber. The two of us walked over. We were just talking and we get over there and we start walking through the building. Sandy said, “This is pretty good. I like it here. Maybe we should just stay here.”

Reti: Like permanently.

Blumenthal: Like permanently. I thought oh, that’s heartening. Maybe people won’t object so strongly.

So I went back. Then Peter Bodenheimer—I had appointed Peter to be the space czar for astronomy.¹¹⁷ Whenever I was chair, Peter was always the space czar because space was always such a sensitive issue, and such a difficult issue and Peter was very efficient. You gave him a job, he just did it; so you never had to worry about it. And Peter was one of the most fair people I knew. Everybody else had self-interest; Peter always put everybody’s interests first. And he was unbribable, if you know what I mean. Not that anyone would give bribes. But he would do what he thought was fair. I trusted him to do what was fair. So I asked Peter to do a space plan for Kerr Hall, which he did. It was very fair. I have to admit, when he did the plan I used my prerogative as chair to move a few people around, because I thought that the interactions would be a little bit better. But I didn’t move many people.

So we came up with a plan and we moved in. The first thing that happened after we moved in is people said, “This is great. We love it here.” The reason people loved it here (and it was true for physics and astronomy), was, first of all, there really weren’t all that many physics labs. I mean, SCIPP [Santa Cruz Institute for Particle Physics] had labs and there were a few solid-state labs. But there were a few spaces here that could be used that way or modified. But most of the physics labs were not wet labs. They weren’t difficult labs to

set up. You just needed a large room. You didn't need something that was so super-duper special as a laboratory. Secondly, I think they kept the teaching labs in Nat Sci II open. Third—and this is the most crucial point of all—this building has interaction space.

Reti: Ah, the lobby, the deck.

Blumenthal: There's the lobby. If you go up on any of the floors, there's little spaces, little alcoves, where you can talk. Now think about Nat Sci II—Nat Sci II is nothing but a long corridor of offices. That's all it is, this seemingly infinitely long corridors of offices, with almost no space for people to congregate and talk. It's a very unwelcoming place.

It was actually, it turns out, designed that way. Because the goal of Chancellor Dean McHenry was not to have the laboratories to be places where faculty would hang out. He wanted faculty to hang out in their colleges. Therefore, he wanted buildings like Nat Sci II to be unwelcoming places that were functional—you could do your laboratory stuff there—but he didn't want them to be the social centers of the campus for faculty. But what it meant for scientists was that we didn't have good spaces to interact.

Reti: Is that something you saw in a plan? Or is that an interpretation that when you're trying to understand why things were done you're applying?

Blumenthal: It's what I heard from people like Bruce Rosenblum, who were kind of here at the beginning.

Reti: That makes complete sense to me, when I think about how Dean McHenry was thinking about space and the colleges and the way that the sciences would fit into the campus.

Blumenthal: So, we all moved into this building. We all liked it here. Some of us had bigger offices, because the offices here are not equal-sized. But almost all of us had

opportunities to interact, no matter what floor we were on. There were casual interactions. In fact, soon after we arrived, a few of us went out and got some old couches and put them out in the hallway. But ultimately the fire marshal made us take them away.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: But the idea was, we wanted to encourage those informal interactions. I had a corner office on the fourth floor. I had a much larger office than I'd had. I didn't really care about the size of my office, but it was fun to be up there. And I was in a little alcove with another littler office. The littler office was first occupied by Bill Burke, who was the giant of general relativity. And then after Bill died—he had an auto accident in, I forget, Wyoming or Montana or someplace up there. He was paralyzed and hospitalized. He was in the hospital for a couple of months, maybe. He was with his girlfriend. She was relatively uninjured, but he was paralyzed. And while they thought he would live, he didn't. That was just so, so, so sad. He was so athletic, so dynamic in what he did. He was intellectually deep, he was super smart. He had done this fundamental work on relativity as a graduate student, for his dissertation using techniques that other people had not ever developed. He was really smart, often difficult to understand, but smart. It was a tragedy.

Reti: Yes, a huge loss.

Blumenthal: Anyway, when Bill left, then Steve Thorsett moved in.¹¹⁸ I loved having the office next to Steve. Steve and I were political junkies, both of us. I learned so much from him. We talked about astronomy; we talked about politics. This was the time when Bush vs. Gore happened. He was so much fun to be next to. Then Doug Lin was just down the hall. Doug had an office with a one-way mirror. (laughter) He had a mirror on his side, but people in the next office couldn't look into his office because it had been a child psychology research lab.

Reti: Oh, because the education board had been up there many years earlier.

Blumenthal: So I think he put it in a Venetian blind or something.

But it was just a fun place to be. I really enjoyed it up there. Sandy was down the hall.

Reti: So astronomy was up there for a long time.

Blumenthal: We were up there for a long time, as was physics.

And then they fixed Nat Sci II, so they moved the SCIPP labs back into Nat Sci II, which was more natural. Then they decided that it was time for all of us to move back to Nat Sci II, and none of the faculty in physics or in astronomy wanted to move back to Nat Sci II. That led to some interesting conversations.

We started strategizing. George Brown was then the chair of physics.¹¹⁹ I think George Gaspari was around.¹²⁰ He may have been retired by then. But I remember talking to George, because I was coming up with a plan and George was one of the most strategic people I knew.

Reti: George Gaspari or George Brown?

Blumenthal: George Gaspari. Sorry, there are too many Georges in this story.

Reti: There are a lot of Georges.

Blumenthal: George Brown was funny, because since we're both GB, we got a lot of email for each other.

So, we started hatching a plan. And meanwhile, poor Dave Kliger, who was then the dean of PB Sci, was basically saying, "Hey, this is done and it's ready for people to move back." And we were hearing from our faculty, "We're not going back. We don't want to go back.

That's a horrible—" This was kind of awkward. We all knew that the chancellor's office was going to move in here, so we knew what we were standing in the way of. But nobody wanted to move, because it was so much more pleasant here, so much more pleasant. So we decided we'd make the case for not moving back. We made the case, and it fell on relatively deaf ears, because that wasn't the plan. And to be blunt, Nat Sci II wasn't going to serve as a chancellor's office.

Reti: No. No. (laughs) That's ironic.

Blumenthal: (laughs) So it was interesting. I remember, ultimately, somehow physics and astronomy met together and decided that I would be the spokesperson for the two departments, because we needed one spokesperson. I went several times to the campus Space Committee. I think it was the first time I went. It was really unfortunate because they let other people in the room, too. Bruce Rosenblum was there, too and they gave Bruce a chance to speak. I really regretted that, because I thought he weakened our case. Bruce started making the argument that physics is the most social of sciences. At an intellectual level, he had a point, that the interactions among physicists really were important to the advancement of the field. He's right, and he had a good point, and that is a form of social activity, to interact with your colleagues. So all of that is true, but it was the worst possible argument to make with a bunch of social scientists in the room. I felt like it didn't do anything to advance the argument, to compare physics to social science. It just made people annoyed and it was unnecessary. That's why I wished he had not been there to make that case. But I actually agreed with him, just to be honest.

So we made the case to the Space Committee. I don't think it went very well. But I do remember talking afterwards to the dean of the arts, Ed Houghton, which I so appreciated because Ed was completely honest with me. Basically, he said, "Look, at a sensible level

you make a really good case. As the dean of the arts, I'm interested in making sure that my" (I forget which department was going to move to the Communications Building) "but what I don't want to have happen is to have anyone screw up the move that happens with the arts division. If there's no screw-up in that, then I'm all fine with whatever plan you put forward, because you've made a case." I thought it was great. I really appreciated his honesty. So when I went back and in our planning, I made sure that whatever we came up with included the arts in a fair and reasonable way.

We were kind of at an impasse, because the chancellor, ultimately, was going to make a decision. We knew there wasn't going to be a lot of sympathy for our position.

Reti: Wait, I need some clarification because I understand that you wanted to stay here.

Blumenthal: Mm hmm.

Reti: So basically the position was we want to stay here and what— I mean, what was the practical negotiating position? You didn't have an alternative plan.

Blumenthal: Well, we tried to come up with some alternative plans. But the truth is, I didn't feel like I was positioned with the data I needed about the campus to be able to do sensible campus planning, so I didn't really feel like I could do that. I was sensitive to the arts, so everything that I did, I tried to arrange things in a way that it was clear that the arts would get what they needed. I didn't think that there would be other academic units.

I framed this as the dark side versus the light side: the mean administration against the productive scientists. That's the only way we could frame it. And since, by definition, the chancellor's office isn't productive of anything—I hate to say it, but that's how I thought.

(laughs) Little did I know—

Reti: It gave you an up-close understanding of how some people view the chancellor's office, because you had been there.

Blumenthal: Right.

I thought about this a lot. I realized Karl Pister was within a year of leaving. So this was an unwinnable fight, but if we could delay until a new chancellor came, then we had another bite of the apple. How could a new chancellor take two prominent departments and basically kick them back to a place they didn't want to go? (laughs) That was the strategic thinking on my part. It was all about delay.

Meanwhile, poor Dave Kliger is in this awful situation where basically he's telling us we've got to prepare our departments to move back to Nat Sci II; the building is soon going to be done, etcetera, etcetera. And basically we're saying, "No, our departments aren't ready to do that." So finally we got in a discussion with him of, "Well maybe there could be some money to fix Nat Sci II."

Reti: Oh, to make it a more socially interactive space?

Blumenthal: Yeah. So we all agreed that that would be the route to go. So we put together a planning group, including physics and astronomy faculty and God knows who else, to come up with a plan for how we would modify Nat Sci II in order to make it a place that we would want to come back to.

I appointed some reasonable people to that group. Physics didn't. Physics' tradition has been more: take no prisoners. So they appointed some people who weren't afraid to assert themselves, shall we say? So at the end of the day, they came back with a plan. It was a pretty radical plan and it would have cost a lot of square feet of occupiable space in Nat Sci II.

Reti: And this is at a time when the campus is growing again. So space is becoming much more of a premium by the early '90s.

Blumenthal: Yes. So ultimately the plan that he came up with—I would have been fine with it—but it was clearly not going to be an easy thing to do. It just wasn't going to be salable. But this all occupied time to do all of this.

At a certain point, Dave Kliger asked George Brown and me to come see him. We did. He said, "Look, this may or may not work, but you have to get your faculty ready. We have to start the planning process for moving back to Nat Sci II."

And George and I both said, "No."

Reti: (laughs) Oh, wow.

Blumenthal: I said, "Dave, I can't do this. This is my faculty. These are my colleagues. They don't want to do it. You can give me the authority to force the issue, to say, 'You've got to do it. Here's the office you're moving into. The movers are coming Monday.' You can do that. You can give me that authority. But I don't want it. I don't want to be the guy who does that. So at the end of the day, if what that means is you're going to have to say, 'You're fired as chair,' I'm fine with that. Fire me as chair and I will be just fine with that. I won't be mad at you. We can stay friends, and all that. But I just cannot be in that position."

Poor Dave was in an awful place. Meanwhile the clock was ticking. Soon Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood arrives. So the strategic plan worked. We did delay things until we had a new chancellor. M.R.C., as you know, was a problem solver. She was also not afraid to think about different solutions. She and her team came up with a solution. I greatly admired the originality of the solution. It shouldn't have worked. They were so lucky that

it worked. Her solution was: astronomy and physics have to move out of Kerr. They don't want to move into Nat Sci II. But it just so happens we're building an environmental science building called the Interdisciplinary Sciences Building [ISB]. It's a limited size. It doesn't have very many labs. It's already been designed. But environmental sciences really needs more labs. So how about we move environmental sciences into Nat Sci II, keep SCIPP there, because they need those SCIPP labs, I'll move environmental sciences into Nat Sci II and then move physics and astronomy into the ISB building.

Turns out we were happy. We got a building that was much better designed for the kind of interactions that we wanted. Environmental sciences was happy because they got more labs than they ever thought they would get. Physics was happy for the same reason astronomy was happy. It all seemed like a beautifully designed plan, brilliant, almost. Except for one small little thing. You just add up the square space. There wasn't enough square footage for astronomy in that plan to make it work.

But it just so happens that at that very moment, astronomy was in the process of receiving a huge NSF award to build the Center for Adaptive Optics. So the Center for Adaptive Optics came along just in time to give an additional boost of square footage, which then provided the space we needed in order to make that plan work.

Reti: And all these buildings are in very close proximity.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: Wow, that's fascinating.

Blumenthal: So it all did work. Now physics and astronomy are very limited in space, so I think they've actually spread out now into Thimann again. I think that's where Bill Mathews's office is, for example. So it wasn't really a good long-term solution, and it

wouldn't have worked at all without the Center for Adaptive Optics, but it worked. And then the chancellor moved in here and they left McHenry Library. Then they redid Kerr Hall to make it the chancellor's office, although that really didn't get done until Denice Denton came.

A lot of the things here in this office are Denice's. The floors in the hallway—that was some design Denice came up with. This office. This office is actually unchanged from Denice's time except for a couple of things. One, that chair wasn't there. I got that chair. I got this chair. Other than that, everything in here is from Denice. Oh, I guess the TV has now changed. They had a big TV and they've changed it out for a newer one. But other than that, it's identical. And so that's how I ended up here.

There are a couple of interesting footnotes to the story. One footnote is that when I was, some years later, appointed acting chancellor of the campus, my first comment that I got from Steve Thorsett, who was then the dean of PB Sci, was, "George, you will do *anything* in order to get back to Kerr Hall." (laughter)

The second interesting comment came from M.R.C. a couple of years later. When I returned from Israel, I was made the chair of the Committee on Privilege and Tenure, the campus senate committee, which I'll talk more about in one of our future sessions. But as a result of being the chair of the Committee on Privilege and Tenure, I was a member of the Senate Executive Committee. M.R.C. every fall would have a fall retreat. I barely knew M.R.C. She had been here one year before I left for sabbatical. I knew her, but very slightly. So I returned from being away, and I never returned during that year. Not quite true. I did return once to take my son to camp. But I never returned to campus.

And so I show up at this fall retreat. I don't even remember where it was, but it was outside. I showed up at this fall retreat and the first thing I noticed was all the men were wearing jackets and ties and I was wearing shorts.

Reti: Oh, my goodness. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I felt a little bit awkward. I walked in to wherever it was and M.R.C. came over to me, and very warmly, and quite surprisingly to me, welcomed me, and told me how glad she was I was here. But she said, "There's somebody new to campus I want to introduce you to." So she took me over and introduced me to Meredith Michaels, who had just arrived on campus from the Office of the President, as our new vice chancellor of planning and budget. So the three of us were talking for a few minutes. M.R.C. told me Meredith had come from the Office of the President. I had been the chair of astronomy. And she said to Meredith, "I've got to tell you something about these astronomers. They refused to move out of Kerr Hall. After the earthquake, they refused to move out of Kerr Hall. You know how bad it got? It got so bad that one day I got a call from Sandy Faber."

Just as an aside, Sandy was fairly close with M.R.C. They became friends. So Sandy knew M.R.C. quite well. Sandy, as you know, is one of the most eminent faculty members on this campus, if not the most. So M.R.C. said, "And one day I got a call from Sandy Faber in astronomy and Sandy told me, 'M.R.C., if you make us move back to Nat Sci II, I'm going to handcuff myself to my desk.'"

(Reti laughs)

Blumenthal: I refuse to go." We all laughed. Knowing Sandy as I do, that's about the last thing Sandy would ever say. That's just not Sandy. So we laughed. And then M.R.C. said, "And you know what I said to Sandy? I said to Sandy, 'I hope you do that, because at least I'll know how to get you on the phone.'"

(Reti laughs)

Blumenthal: You also have to know about Sandy that she's very hard to reach.

Reti: I didn't know that. (laughs)

Blumenthal: She often doesn't read her email for a while. The only way I ever reach her is I call her at home at night.

Reti: (laughs) Oh my God, that's funny.

Blumenthal: That was hilarious. So then M.R.C. went away, she went off to do something else. I was left alone with Meredith, who I'd never met before. Meredith turned to me and smiled, and she said, and I will never forget this, "Now tell me what really happened." (laughter) And she and I became instant friends.

Reti: Oh, that's great.

Chair of the Astronomy Board (Second Time)

Blumenthal: Well, back to being chair. Let me start with Dave Klinger as dean. Dave Klinger was an outstanding dean. He served fifteen or twenty years as dean of PB Sci, so he provided real stability and longevity, which that division had never had. But it was more than that. Dave was selfless, he was insightful, and he was a particularly consultative dean with the chairs. He was an outstanding dean to have in tough times, and we had some tough times during those years. I'm not saying he wouldn't have been a good dean in good times, but in tough times, he was a great dean. And I'll tell you later on, as we get down in the story, he was also a great vice chancellor, EVC, during tough times. He's a man of integrity and selflessness.

I had a big argument with Dave. So Dave had regular meetings of all the chairs. I think they were at eight am. We called them the eight am yawners because for me getting there at eight am was not an easy thing to do. I don't think I was alone. So during one of the budget crises, and I think one of the really serious ones—maybe it was the VERIP ones.¹²¹ I don't remember exactly anymore, but it was a deep budget crisis. Everyone was getting cut. Everyone was complaining. And at one point Dave came in and he said, when he was presenting the budget cuts, that after several years of budget cuts one of the things he was going to cut was his own salary. He got a stipend for being dean and he got summer salary for being dean. He said he would cut that. I don't know whether he had planned to replace at least the summer stuff with money from his grant, because Dave was always fairly well funded. He certainly could have done that. But he announced that that was one of the cuts he was going to make. I objected, so we had this big argument. He said that this was something the division needed because funds were so short. I argued that I didn't want to be associated with an academic division that paid its dean less than the other divisions paid their deans.

I remember we argued about it a long time. I brought the other chairs in. I led that argument. I don't know how the other chairs felt, but I felt pretty strongly. I also don't remember how it came out, to be honest with you. I still think I was right. But the mere fact that we had that argument is an indication of the integrity and selflessness that he displayed as dean.

He also had a level of insight. I'll give you an example. This happened right when I came back from that sabbatical at Harvard and became department chair. The first question on the agenda—and apparently it had been discussed extensively by the chairs the previous year—was whether or not to invite staff to the chairs' meetings. Until then, the chairs' meetings were just the chairs of the departments and Dave. That's how it had been when

I was chair the first time. But Dave wanted to expand the people in the room to include staff from the divisions, as well as the department managers of all of the departments.

Reti: Well, during a budget crisis, I would imagine that there was a lot of knowledge that staff had. I'm guessing that it would have been very valuable to have them be part of those meetings.

Blumenthal: Well, Dave really felt strongly about it. The department chairs all were strongly opposed to it.

Reti: They were opposed to it.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And in fact, I'll be honest with you. I was opposed to it at the time myself, although I soon came to realize that position was a mistake. Mainly my opposition was just one of concern that we have frank and open and honest discussions unimpeded by the presence of others in the room.

Well, Dave decided that despite the almost universal opposition of the chairs, he was going to do it. And I will tell you, it turned out to be absolutely the right decision. That's why I say, I was wrong. Because the staff added a lot of knowledge. The dynamics were really interesting because there were a few divisional staff members who spoke out during these meetings. Generally, the department managers were very quiet and said nothing, except I think there was one who spoke out a lot. I thought she was really sharp. I liked it, but I don't think it was well received by the other chairs. I thought she was great, but that was her personality, to do that. I think it added a lot of benefit, and having the department managers hear what was going on, I think was also great.

I told my department manager that she was welcome to speak up at these meetings. But there was no way she was going to do it. What I usually tell people is if I don't say stupid

things at least 10 percent of the time, then I'm not speaking up enough. Maybe 20 percent. I don't know what the right ratio is, but inevitably speaking up for me, speaking up a lot means saying stupid things sometimes. I can live with that.

Reti: Right. But, of course, there's a hierarchy at the university. Staff have less power and are more vulnerable to losing their positions than faculty.

Blumenthal: I understand the vulnerability. But on the other hand, I actually don't see a lot of staff being booted down when they do speak up and say something that isn't the brightest thing in the world. I don't mean to say that's what's going to always happen, because it isn't. Staff will often add important things to the conversation. That's why I fought so hard for staff advisors to the regents, which is a story we'll get to later.

So for me, that was an educating experience. I learned a lot that made a big difference to me later in my career.

I mentioned another kind of a smaller point, but again it brought home some issues to me. To me, this was a big deal. I don't think it was necessarily to other people. But this offended me. One day in one of these meetings with the chairs, they brought in somebody from Risk Services to talk about safety and stuff like that, and they also brought in somebody from Title IX to talk about Title IX issues, which was all fine. But both of them said something that really troubled me. They said that if we as chair, for example on the safety issue, didn't exercise due caution and train all of our staff adequately, if one of our staff gets an arm caught in a Xerox machine or something and is injured, we could be held personally liable. We heard that twice. We heard that from the Title IX person and then we heard it from the Risk Services person.

So at the next meeting, I came back in and I made life difficult. I said, "Look," I reminded people of that conversation. I said to Dave, "Can you tell me why I shouldn't resign? I have

a family. I have a responsibility to my family. You don't pay me enough to take risks. I'd be much better off just being a faculty member. To subject my family to the potential liability coming from my job when I'm just trying to do my job doesn't make sense. I need clarification about when the university would cover issues of liability and when they would not." So I made him go and actually get somebody to come and make a presentation on the ways in which the university will cover liability, which of course they do. I kind of knew that. I just didn't like being threatened. In fact, the university probably over-commits to doing that rather than under-commits.

Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer

Reti: Today is November 26, 2018. This is Irene Reti and I am here for my tenth interview with George Blumenthal for the oral history we're doing together. And today we're going to start by talking about Robert Sinsheimer.

Blumenthal: Yeah, thank you, Irene. Bob Sinsheimer, I think, came in at a crucial time in the campus' history. He followed Angus Taylor. But Angus Taylor—as great as he was, and I had just tremendous admiration for Angus Taylor—he was never seen as more than a stopgap. He was the acting chancellor until the very end.

But when Sinsheimer came in, we knew Sinsheimer was our great long-term hope for the campus. He had been appointed, I believe by David Saxon, who was somewhat unknown on the campus, although even at the time, I knew about Saxon's history.¹²² (This is a quick sidelight, but it's worth nothing. I happen to know this factoid and I'm not sure why I knew this factoid. I might add, it shocks me that almost no regents know about this.) David Saxon was a young assistant professor of physics at UCLA in the 1950s. The 1950s was when the board of regents decided to insist that all faculty sign a loyalty oath that they were not members of the Communist Party. This was a very controversial decision

by the regents, which Clark Kerr discusses extensively in his book *The Blue and the Gold*. At the time, there were on the order of, I forget, twenty, twenty-five faculty members in the UC system who refused to sign that oath, so they were summarily fired by the regents for refusing to sign this loyalty oath. One of those faculty members was David Saxon.

Reti: No kidding!

Blumenthal: No kidding. I said, little-known fact.

Reti: That's amazing.

Blumenthal: He was actually fired by the university. And he joined in the subsequent lawsuit against the university, which ultimately the university lost in the Supreme Court. So after that Supreme Court decision, David Saxon was reinstated into his faculty position at UCLA. And the rest is history. I mean, he grew up and he ultimately became the president of the university.

Reti: (laughs) That's amazing.

Blumenthal: It's an amazing story. I think it says something about principles. I greatly admire that about him. I also admire the fact that the regents would allow that to happen, allow someone with that history to become the president of the university. It also says a lot about him that he could overcome what must have been a bitter and difficult experience in his life in order to do that. So there's nothing but good things to say about that.

But he was very close to Sinsheimer. Sinsheimer and he were friends and I think that's one of the things that helped Sinsheimer ultimately get the job. He did the reorganization of the campus. We discussed that already. And I think that was an important factor in his success. It was a defining moment for him.

The enrollments in the campus started to go up. We did have this exchange program [the Berkeley Redirect Program] with Berkeley where we would allow students to spend two years at Santa Cruz and then transfer to Berkeley as a way of increasing our enrollments. But basically, they kept it going.

But Sinsheimer also, as chancellor, he was the one who came up with the idea of the genome project. So he organized a conference. I was vaguely aware of it. I read a little bit about it at the time. Of course, in retrospect, I know a lot more about it. But in 1985 he organized a conference at Santa Cruz during his chancellorship to conceive of the concept of mapping the human genome.¹²³ And remember, he became chancellor in 1977. But think about it—the DNA molecule, the work of Watson and Crick was the early to mid '50s, so it hadn't been that long that people even knew about DNA. Nobody understood the coding of DNA for a long time. I think Sinsheimer proposed this as soon as it was realized that there was a coding. His idea was that there should be an international effort to actually map the human genome. That was the real point of this conference.

He also did a lot of work on the ethics of genomics. He was one of the first people in the world to be thinking about issues of ethics and genomics. But in a very real sense, this concept of mapping the human genome originated at Santa Cruz. And I think it is really remarkable that it was completed ultimately at Santa Cruz, through circumstances completely beyond his control. This was during M.R.C. Greenwood's time and the work was done by David Haussler and the biologist, Jim Kent. He was at the time a graduate student in biology. The two of them completed the Human Genome Project. Labs all over the world were measuring little pieces of the human genome, but no one had solved the problem of how to put the pieces of the puzzle together, and there were literally millions and millions and millions of pieces to that puzzle. David and his colleague figured out how

to put them together into one map of the human genome, which of course we published on our website, a key role of UC Santa Cruz on the genome project.

But it all started with Bob, and I think it's important to acknowledge that. I know David Haussler very much acknowledges that. I think it's really important.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: And then, I want to talk about one more topic which fits under the department chair banner. Right after the first time that I became department chair, Don Osterbrock, who was then the director of Lick Observatory UCO, had been really, really frustrated with the upper administration, first during the Christensen era, and then on this issue during Angus Taylor's time as well. He was primarily frustrated with Academic Vice Chancellor Eugene Cota-Robles.¹²⁴ The reason he was frustrated was that one of our faculty appointments, Steve Vogt, when we hired him, he was slated to go into an 80/20 appointment, that is, 80 percent Lick Observatory, 20 percent department.¹²⁵ But when his appointment letter came through from the EVC, it was 100 percent Lick Observatory. Don could absorb the additional 20 percent cost. That wasn't really the issue. The issue was that Steve wanted to teach; he wanted to be treated like everybody else. And suddenly he found himself in a different kind of category than all of the other faculty with whom he was working.

So Don wrote a series of letters to Bob Sinsheimer complaining about this. I remember right after I became department chair, Don came into my office and he plunked this file on my desk. He said, "I'm giving up. I am so frustrated, I'm giving up. Let's see what you can do as department chair." Well, he actually used the word "board chair" in those days.

So I looked in the file. There was a series of letters from Don Osterbrock to Bob Sinsheimer complaining about this and complaining that Vogt should be treated like

everyone else. He was a legitimate academic and this was inappropriate to change things in the middle of the hiring process. It goes on and on and on. And he kept getting no's, or not interested, back from the upper administration. So he had given me this task to do something about it.

Of course, I agreed 100 percent with Don, but I also knew that a letter from Associate Professor George Blumenthal was not likely to get any better response than a letter from *the* Don Osterbrock. So I put on my thinking cap and I thought about it for a while. I wrote a letter to Sinsheimer. I said, "I want to call to your attention the fact that the appointment of Steve Vogt is illegal and violates both university policy and federal law." I pointed out that it violated university policy because it wasn't advertised as the appointment that it was. It violated university policy because when we voted on the appointment, members of the department like me, who have no official affiliation with Lick, voted on that appointment. In fact, I even took Vogt to dinner when he came. I remember his visit well as a candidate because I was so impressed with him. We hired him out of graduate school. I said, "I think that it really violates university policy and violates federal law because it's inconsistent with affirmative action guidelines of the law that require that positions be advertised fairly and competed fairly."

Reti: Mm hmm. And this was in the early days of affirmative action.

Blumenthal: This was early affirmative action days. And then I said, "Oh, and by the way, I also agree with all the stuff Don Osterbrock said." (laughter)

So I sent my letter in and I got a note back from Bob saying, "Thank you for your letter. I've sent this over to Academic Personnel to get their evaluation of the concerns that you've raised." And by God, two or three weeks later, I get a second letter from him saying,

“Having reviewed your allegations, Academic Personnel is in agreement with you. And consequently, I am modifying the Vogt appointment to be an 80/20 appointment.”

I was stunned. I couldn't believe that I had done this. And I had done this on a technicality, when in fact Osterbrock had made all the right arguments. I felt kind of silly in a way, because Osterbrock was right. The reasons he gave for why this should be done were the right reasons. My reasons were kind of piddling legal reasons, if you know what I mean.

Reti: So why do you think you were effective?

Blumenthal: Because I raised things that hadn't been raised before. I just basically said to him, “This is illegal.” So if you're a chancellor and somebody tells you something is illegal, you want to, you know— I think that's why I succeeded. Am I proud of succeeding? Yes. But I'm also a little bit embarrassed for having succeeded on arguments that weren't really the substantive arguments. But I'll take the win whenever we can get it.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: The irony is, I think Steve actually didn't care all that much. He had fewer teaching obligations in his previous role, but I think he wanted to be like everyone else. I'm particularly proud because Steve turned out to be an outstanding astronomer. He built the high-resolution spectrometer, which is still being used at Keck Observatory, which transformed astronomy in many, many ways. And he discovered numerous planets, did some really great work on planets. He's the guy who really designed and built the automatic planet finder at Lick Observatory. He's had an extremely distinguished career. He's now retired. It makes me feel old when all these people I hired, or was involved in hiring, have long since retired. But you're only as old as you feel.

Chair of Astronomy (Second Time)

So now we want to move back to the second time I was department chair. This was kind of surreal. So there was a controversy that developed, maybe on campus, but certainly within the division, having to do with the requirement that there be senate service by faculty. Let me explain the controversy and tell you what happened. And then I'll try to tell you what I think happened.

At a certain point, the EVC, Michael Tanner—and I think for all good reasons and motivations —decided that senate service was an important contribution by senior faculty, and he wanted to encourage senior faculty to do it. This became controversial, certainly within the science division, because there were a couple of senior faculty members who were denied promotion or merit increases in their personnel files, and one of the reasons that they were denied that increase was the absence of senate service. In one of the cases I know for sure the reason for the absence was not because of an unwillingness—that particular person had volunteered multiple times to serve on senate committees—but it was because nobody wanted this person on a senate committee and therefore this person never served.

Now, I am skeptical myself that the lack of senate service ended up being the difference between merit increase and not merit increase, or promotion and not promotion. I'm really skeptical about that, knowing the individuals involved. But nevertheless, it became a point of discussion. And there was a surreal meeting of the chairs with Dave Klinger, where we invited Michael Tanner in to talk about this issue. It was surreal. It was so surreal. I learned a lesson there, but I'm not exactly sure what that lesson was. (Reti laughs) Because Michael talked about what his expectations were of faculty, what he wanted them to do, etcetera, etcetera. It was a long discussion with lots of questions. I

was sitting there paying attention; I didn't fall asleep or anything. But I didn't really understand it very well.

As the discussion was winding down, I decided I really wanted to understand the upshot of this discussion. So I piped up and I said, "Look, I just want to summarize what *I think* you said today, just to make sure that I understand it," I said it to Michael. So I gave him what I thought he was saying. I quickly summarized what I thought he was saying.

And his response was, "No, no, no. You have it all wrong."

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs)

Blumenthal: He then proceeded to say what he actually intended to say and I still didn't understand it. I walked out of that meeting not having a clue. I still think that my summary was probably closer to what he said. But since he completely rejected my summary, I have no idea to this day what was intended there. That's how there can be failures to communicate. That meeting was held in order to improve communications, but it sure didn't.

But even having said that, I really want to give Dave a lot of praise. Dave really provided leadership within the division. He provided leadership on making cuts during hard times. He provided leadership on directions to go. He was very open about discussions, about how faculty resources should be allocated within the division. Some of those discussions were very, very controversial because we had relatively few faculty positions. I remember a couple of times when there were positions that we were debating what to do. I remember being very, very supportive of earth sciences. Math was always arguing that they should be getting these positions. Probably on a workload basis, math was right. On the other hand, math was a mess, and earth sciences was a department that had its act, had its shit together, so to speak. Not only did they hire excellent people; they got along with each

other, they were supportive of each other. They worked well with their students. And they were a homegrown department; unlike astronomy, where we started off a top-notch department, earth sciences had to work for it. So I was always very supportive.

Reti: We have one of the top earth science departments in the country.

Blumenthal: Exactly. So for example when the issue came up of whether to do a spousal hire to keep Thorne Lay, I was totally supportive of it. When the issue came up to do a spousal hire, I think this was Elise Knittle's spouse, who's Quentin Williams, who is a spousal hire. I think there was a new FTE that I also strongly supported for them. The math chair at the time was really annoyed with me. When I expressed support, he gave me the old Ronald Reagan line. "Here you go again." (laughter) But I felt strongly that you should reward people who do good and departments that do good, even if it leads to disparities. So that's why I was always so supportive of them.

But Dave was so fair. He really tried very, very hard to be fair. He gave lots of people opportunities to make their case. Even if I didn't get what I wanted from him, I always felt like I had a shot.

Dave had a chief of staff. His first chief of staff was Larry Maxcy, who was in the division. And then after Larry retired, he hired a guy, Dennis Artman, who I really liked a lot. I haven't seen him in ages. After he retired, he came back and worked for a while for the planning and budget group. I liked Dennis, so I talked to Dennis a lot. And Dennis really hated the guy who was then the vice chancellor of planning and budget. He was the predecessor of Meredith Michaels, Richard Jensen. He retired and went to Santa Barbara in his retirement.

Anyway, he and Dennis Artmann hated each other. It was so funny because I thought both of them were fairly competent in their own ways. I thought Dennis for sure was highly

competent. Probably if I'd chosen a vice chancellor of planning and budget, it would have been Dennis. But in any event, this other guy was one of these people—and again—I only saw him from my perspective as a faculty member, as a chair of a department—he was one of these people who almost liked to play the buffoon sometimes when he gave talks or when he talked to people. But actually, when you talked to him it was clear he was really smart. And he just put on this buffoon-like—you know, he had a funny sense of humor. He didn't seem that serious, but I never doubted that he was serious. But he and Dennis used to be at it all the time. All the time.

I remember one day we had a meeting and the chairs were complaining that despite the fact that finally they had increased the budget of UC—after several years of really horrible budget cuts and pain and suffering, they had finally increased the budget of UC, including UC Santa Cruz and that was the year that the science division had to cut the number of TAs that we could offer.

Reti: And why was that?

Blumenthal: So, of course, there was a big discussion among the chairs. Dennis basically said that that was a decision of the vice chancellor of planning and budget and there was no going back on this.

We were, by then, in Kerr Hall. Kerr Hall used to have a coffee cart on the second floor. After the meeting, I was there getting coffee or tea. In those days, I think I drank coffee. I was getting a cup of coffee and I ran into the vice chancellor. So I went over to him. I started chatting with him. I said, “Look, you know, I've got a question for you, if you don't mind.”

He said, “No, that's fine.”

I said, “You know, I’m just a poor little old faculty member, just from the countryside, don’t know a lot about high-falutin’ finance. But I don’t understand what’s going on, because the campus is getting more money and the number of TAs in the science division is going down. This is really hurting our educational mission.”

He said, “Well, that’s because Dennis is misusing the funds within the division.” He made some comment like that.

I said, “Well, no. I find that hard to believe. Because we’ve gone over the budget and we’ve seen the allocations, and it looks like this was a line item from the central campus, which made this decision. And I just don’t understand it at a time that our resources are increasing.”

He said, “Well, you know,” he gave me some answer. He said, “I’ll look into it.” I thought, great. So I went back up to my office and I called Dennis. I told him about the conversation. Dennis was thankful that I had raised the issue. An hour later I get another call from Dennis. He said, “We just heard, our TA allocation has been increased.” So my little old country bumpkin kind of—(laughter) thing worked. Maybe that was a mistake, for all I know.

Reti: He went back and looked at it or something.

Blumenthal: But then I knew there was no love lost between the two of them.

A couple of other things were going on. I can’t remember exactly what the timing was, but this was also the time of the VERIPs. You may remember, we had three VERIPs.

Reti: 1994. Yes, I do.

Blumenthal: In astronomy, we lost a lot of people. We lost Merle Walker, Bob Kraft, Don Osterbrock; I think George Herbig. Maybe one or two others. We lost a lot of our most eminent faculty. One of my big dilemmas was how to manage all of that and part of managing all of that had to do with space. This was even before we moved to Kerr Hall. What to do about space. It was really awkward because on the one hand, some faculty, like Merle Walker, had an office in prime country. And Merle also had space; he had storage space for lots of stuff. But Merle never interacted with the department much when he was an active faculty member and I sure didn't think he was going to interact a lot after retirement. On the other hand, he's a good guy. He was a very productive faculty member who I thought had been somewhat mistreated in his career.

On the other hand, there were people like Bob Kraft. When Kraft retired, I went to see him because he was scheduled to teach a class on stellar populations, which was his specialty. I said, "So, Bob, I'm sorry, I don't have any money to pay you to teach this class. We're going to have to cancel it."

He said, "You're not going to cancel it. I'll teach it."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I don't need money. I'll just teach it."

Reti: Wow. Right, just to be clear for the reader of this oral history, a lot of faculty who VERIPed then came back and taught. Is that what you're referring to?

Blumenthal: Yes. Yes, thank you for that clarification. So Bob was fine with just volunteering. He just never even thought about the issue of compensation. But Bob also decided that he would move his office from Nat Sci II, where all of us were, to Thimann Labs—Outer Mongolia—far removed from the rest of the department. I objected to that

because it seemed to me that he was volunteering his time; he was a very productive person. He was very eminent. He was still active. He was still working with students. Why wouldn't we keep him in the bosom of the department?

As chair, I had the authority to do stuff. So I had the authority to do this. The problem was, Merle didn't want to move out, and Bob didn't want to stay in. So somehow, I think I enlisted Joe Miller to go with me to talk to Bob Kraft and I think we finally persuaded him, almost against his will, to stay. Merle, I think didn't fundamentally object. I think Merle was being reasonable. We gave him an office. It just wasn't in prime territory.

Reti: Do you think that that VERIP was a major turning point in the campus's history?

Blumenthal: (pauses) No. I don't. I think it was an opportunity. It provided an opportunity to hire junior people to replace some of the senior people. The hiring may not have been immediate, because we didn't have positions, but we knew it would come. Sometimes there is some advantage to having a housecleaning. Yes, we lost some very eminent people from the faculty, not just in astronomy but in other departments as well. All of that is true. On the other hand, one thing Santa Cruz has done extremely well over the years is hire junior faculty. So I think it was maybe, in some ways, a long-term benefit to the campus.

I think it was a huge mistake on the part of the university writ large, because this was a drain on our retirement reserves—the reason that they did the VERIPs is because the retirement system was so overfunded. Let me remind you—(Reti laughs) I know, your eyes are getting wide. So roughly, twenty-five years ago, maybe thirty years ago now, the retirement system for UC, UCRS, was so overfunded that the university was in danger of getting in trouble with the IRS. It wasn't just funded at 100 percent. It was funded at like

150 or 175 percent. I don't remember the exact percentage overfunded it was, but it was hugely overfunded.

Reti: How did that happen? Is that too complicated to get into?

Blumenthal: No. It's because they were conservative about contributions. They insisted that the university and the employees make generous contributions to the retirement system. And because the retirement system is a Defined Benefit plan, if you don't vest, then you lose all of the contributions made by the university on your behalf. So that money just stays in the retirement system. You get your own money out, but not the university's match.

And so what happened twenty-five, thirty years ago, was that the regents decided to stop contributions to the retirement system. I understand that hindsight is much better than foresight. (Reti laughs) But I believe—and had I followed this at the time, which I didn't—I would have believed at the time that this was a mistake. That what they should have done, is reduced contributions instead of setting them to zero. Which they did—both university contributions and employee contributions. I think employees were asked to contribute a couple of percent to some DC plan. But the retirement system got no money and that persisted for a long time, until just a few years ago.

But in addition to doing that, which slowly degraded the fundedness of the retirement system, the university also did certain things which drained the retirement system, and VERIP was one of them. Think about it. The only reason VERIP makes sense is that you're taking these high-income people, the senior people, and you're taking them from the state money and putting them into retirement system money. So that's another drain on the retirement system.

Reti: And you're giving them extra incentives to get more years of service if they'll retire.

Blumenthal: Yeah, that's right. They gave them extra years of service as well, which was an additional drain. So it was really using the retirement system as a way of making up for shortfalls in state funding, which I'm sure felt like a good short-term gain in terms of policy, but long term it was a very bad idea. And it was also a bad idea because in later downturns, many faculty and staff expected there to be VERIPs.

Reti: Oh, yeah. Everybody keeps waiting for VERIP to come back.

Blumenthal: And they did it because of cuts in state funding, not realizing that the retirement system was no longer capable of doing it. And just as a footnote to the story—well, first of all, the [systemwide] Academic Senate for the previous ten years before the restart of contribution had been asking for a restart of contributions, including when I was chair of the senate. But I didn't start it. I can't take credit for that. I simply added my voice to that crowd. But the senate knew for a long time we needed to restart contributions and it didn't happen until almost too late.

And then, just as the university's retirement system was set to approach 100 percent funding was when the crash of 2008 hit. So suddenly it went from like 101 percent funded to like 69 percent funded. That was devastating. So that required a restart of contributions. It also required that contributions be higher than they would normally have been. We are now contributing more than the so-called normal contributions, normal contributions being defined as what you would contribute in steady state to a well-funded retirement system. So we're making up for the fact that the regents didn't really take on adequate fiduciary responsibility for the retirement system. That's going to continue for another twenty years, until we can resume normal contributions.

But anyway, VERIP was a way of easing the budget crisis. But for my department, it had severe consequences.

Another story on my department chair years—one of the faculty who ultimately left, and I don't know whether he VERIPed or not, but I felt badly, and I felt like I didn't quite know how to handle this—was Dave Rank. Dave Rank was an infrared astronomer. He recently passed away, I read. Dave was the most low-key of low-key guys. He never spoke up at meetings, never asked questions at colloquium. But he wrote a lot of papers; he did a lot of work in infrared astronomy. He developed a lot of instruments and he supervised a lot of graduate students. There're a lot of eminent astronomers out there who owe their origins to his supervision.

But at a certain point, for reasons that I'm not sure I understood, Dave kind of lost interest in the university and started going through the motions. I remember at a certain point I came to him and I said, "Look, Dave, what can we do for you? What do you want to do for us?" It was clear, he was just not engaged. He finally said that he was going to retire, at an age that I think was rather early for someone in his situation. I really don't know what was going on. I didn't know him that well. He was not the kind of person who shares his feelings. Many men don't share their feelings, but he was that way to an extreme. And sadly, he retired. Went away. And I didn't see him since.

The last story, an interesting one—so while I was chair, one of the things I kept harping on during my first incarnation as chair was adequate budgeting for the division. I actually kept a budget for my department during that first incarnation as chair. Most departments did not because it was the responsibility of the divisional office, and the divisional office didn't do it. So I used the Lick business office. Admittedly, they weren't obliged to help me with this. But they did. And so I kept a running budget, so I knew what I was spending and how fast I was spending it and whether I was going to hit my budget or not, etcetera. At the end of the year, during my first incarnation, I remember sending the division a detailed accounting of my budget for the previous year: what I'd gotten and how I'd spent

it. And I remember the then-dean who was by then Bill Doyle, saying how impressed he was that somebody had done it. He wished this could be a model for anyone else. Of course, when I asked for more money, I didn't get it.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: But budgeting was important. By the second time I was chair, budgeting was done by the division and the campus was embarked on the first of many, many efforts to make a campuswide system for budgeting called Banner that was supposed to do budgeting for the entirety of the campus, and when they brought on the system, it didn't work. They couldn't even get it to give answers, much less wrong answers. So the department chairs, including me, lived for about a year without getting any updates on where we were with our budget. The same was true of people on grants.

Reti: That's scary!

Blumenthal: It was terribly scary. How can you do anything sensibly under those circumstances? So the chancellor and the EVC held a dinner meeting for all of the chairs on campus. We dutifully went to that meeting. Somebody raised, it might have been me, the question of this budgeting system and the fact that it didn't work. And I remember Michael [Tanner] responded, because he was the computer scientist, saying that this was a really, really good idea. This was the future, and as painful as it was, we really needed to get into the future. By the way, I completely agree with him on that. He was right. But I remember asking him why we didn't go in with Davis, and I think Berkeley, who were developing their own system. And his response was, "Because we're getting there first." I didn't find that a particularly good response, since ours wasn't getting there yet.

They brought in the guy who was the head of this system and he spoke with us. I think that's how the issue came up. He gave us a talk on where it stood. At the end of that talk,

I raised the question. I said, “This is not working. This isn’t working. I know we’ve spent a million dollars or whatever it is on the system already, but isn’t there a time when you have to decide that you made a mistake? And you give up on the million dollars and you move on and do something else?” And both this guy and Michael kind of said, “No, don’t be silly. That is a silly response to the challenge.” I didn’t think it was so silly. I think sometimes you just have to abandon your investment.

Reti: Right. Throwing good money after bad.

Blumenthal: Exactly. But in any event, The sequel to the story is interesting, because they still couldn’t get it to work. And finally they brought in De Clarke. You know De, right?

Reti: (laughs) Oh, yeah. Very well. She’s my best friend.

Blumenthal: So De worked for astronomy. She was the computer person for astronomy. They hired her away on a temporary basis from astronomy to fix this campus system. And she got it working! I mean, she did it with glue and chewing gum kind of, you know what I mean? (Reti laughs) But she was really talented and she got it working.

Reti: For the whole campus?

Blumenthal: For the whole campus.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: Not that it was in a state that you really wanted it, in steady state. But at least the damn thing worked. And to me, De was sort of a hero for the campus. I don’t think most people even knew that she had done this. But she did and I just want to acknowledge that.

Dark Matter

Before we talk about the sabbaticals, I'd rather do dark matter because it's hard to understand the sabbaticals without understanding that work. I may have said a little bit of this before, but ever since I was a graduate student, I was fascinated with cosmology, the evolution of the universe, and with how structure forms in the universe. As a graduate student, I remember reading many papers on the subject of how galaxies form, how structure forms in the universe. It was clear that none of them told a whole and complete story. There were huge missing pieces from the story. There were pieces that made sense, but the whole story didn't make sense. I remember thinking long and hard about what was missing and what I could add that might make this all make sense. I really at the time couldn't come up with something. I was finishing my dissertation on high energy phenomena, but my interest was already there.

By the time I came to Santa Cruz as an assistant professor, they assigned me to teach a course in high-energy astrophysics, a graduate course, which sounded really hot and interesting. But the beauty of high-energy astrophysics is you could define it as anything interesting. So I taught a lot on cosmic rays and x-rays and stuff like that, but I also taught part of it on cosmology, the evolution of the universe. Later, I evolved it into two courses: one on cosmology and one on x-ray and gamma ray astronomy .

But when I started teaching, it helped me to organize my thoughts on this subject. And I came to present this material as a proof of the impossibility that galaxies could form in the universe. So each year I would show the students why it was absolutely impossible that galaxies could form.

Reti: (chuckles) Therefore you should not have been there teaching at all. None of us should have existed.

Blumenthal: We should not have been there. We should go (makes sucking sound) out of existence.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But the point of my framing the issue that way was that obviously galaxies do exist, and therefore there's something wrong with my proof. I just didn't know what was wrong with my proof that galaxies couldn't exist.

There were several ways of looking at it. But the simplest way of thinking about this—and I'll try to explain this to you as best I can—just think about our galaxy. If you have a clump of matter that's denser than surrounding materials, it will start to collapse because of gravity. It's denser than everything else, so it will start to collapse. Makes sense. And if you actually calculate how fast it collapses, certainly in the earlier stages of collapse, it's at a rate that increases exponentially. It really starts collapsing fast. It's called an instability. It's called a gravitational instability.

So once you get something not uniform or a clump, it will collapse. Once it starts collapsing, that collapsing accelerates and accelerates and accelerates. So it happens pretty fast. That's pretty much how stars form.

Reti: What happens when it completely collapses? Or is there a point where it stops?

Blumenthal: Well, eventually the gas heats up and the heating of the gas stops the collapse.

All right. So now, what about the universe? Why can't that work in the universe? Why isn't that how galaxies form, too? Because certainly gravity is responsible for galaxies forming. And unless you're some kind of a weird originalist, you don't think the universe was created with its existing galaxies. Somehow they had to form out of a uniform background

of stuff. So the natural thing is that it be gravitational instabilities. That raised two uncomfortable questions. The first question is: what is the origin of those non-uniformities? Because if the universe were completely uniform, it would not collapse into anything. Even back in my graduate student days, it was realized that it needed fairly significant clumps of non-uniformity or—

Reti: So I'm sorry, I'm trying to follow you here. So uniformity would be defined as what? Everything is—

Blumenthal: Everything has the same density everywhere. Non-uniformity just means that different places there's more density than average. So you have sort of small little clumps of matter. Okay?

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: Even back in my grad student days, people realized that you needed to have clumps of matter or non-uniformity and that they couldn't be too small, because if they were too small, there wouldn't be enough time for them to collapse. And the reason is that, unlike the case I mentioned before of the exponential increase, in an expanding universe, where everything is expanding away from each other, the growth isn't exponential. It's slower than that. So the growth is slow. It grows, but it's slow.

So people knew that. They knew there had to be some minimum size in order to have galaxies by today. Nobody knew what the origin of those non-uniformities were, why the universe wasn't just completely uniform. It's like thinking, we have a Big Bang at the start of the universe. Why isn't everything just uniform? Why does it come out clumpy?

So there were lots of papers written about why it comes out clumpy and in fact, almost all of them were wrong. I looked at it at the time I was writing a paper about magnetic fields

in the universe and one of the things I realized is that the one model that might conceivably work was turbulence in the early universe. But even turbulence didn't work when you looked at it closely. I read some Russian papers that acknowledged the fact that turbulence didn't work. But then they said, "But if you have supersonic photon turbulence, that will work." Those words don't mean anything to me. I don't know what supersonic photon turbulence is. It's like made-up words. You could try to imagine what it is, but it isn't something that feels real, or natural.

So there was really no good model for what the origin of the clumpiness of the universe was, even a small amount of clumpiness. No one understood why things weren't absolutely uniform. So that was one problem.

But there was a second problem. And the second problem was, as I say, the instability isn't exponential. Things don't collapse really quickly; it's very slow at first. And if it's very slow at first, that means that if you go back to a time when the universe was one-thousandth of its current size, then at that time the non-uniformities had to be pretty big already. They had to be bigger than one part in a thousand, at least one part in a thousand in order to form galaxies by today.

But we have a way of measuring how big they were back at that time. The way we measure it is the microwave background radiation. The universe is suffused with thermal radiation from the early universe. That radiation is currently at 2.7 degrees, but when the universe was a thousand times smaller than it is today, that radiation was not at 2.7 degrees, but it was at 2700 degrees.

Reti: You're talking about temperature now.

Blumenthal: The temperature of the radiation. And at higher temperatures than that, it would be ionizing all of the gas in the universe. Ionized gas couldn't collapse, couldn't

gravitationally collapse, because all this radiation would have kept it from collapsing. So the only time you can start to get collapse is after the universe's hydrogen recombines into neutral hydrogen. And that's roughly when the universe was a thousand times smaller than it is today. Or at a time when the universe was 10 to the 4.5 (3×10^4) times younger than today. So if today the universe is 18 billion years old, then at the time of recombination it would have been about 500,000 years old, roughly. Roughly speaking. Doing this in my head, so—

So at 500,000 years, we know that the clumpiness of the universe had to be roughly one part in a thousand at least, maybe even a little bit more than that. Maybe one part in a hundred.

Reti: It's very dense.

Blumenthal: But if it was one part in a hundred, or even one part in a thousand, we would see variations in the temperature of the background radiation over the sky that's bigger than what we observe.

Reti: Because it would have just spread out but still been uneven?

Blumenthal: Because the radiation, the non-uniformity back then would have propagated to today. Whatever was non-uniform then. We're looking back in time when we look at that radiation.

So you can't have it both ways. Either the radiation is non-uniform, and therefore it's consistent with non-uniform mass, or the radiation is uniform, or quite uniform, which is what we observe, in which case there couldn't be this non-uniformity in mass. So even if you had a way to produce these fluctuations originally, even if you could solve the first of

the two problems I mentioned, there was no way to solve the second problem. And that's why I thought galaxies could not exist.

Reti: I see. Okay. Thank you, that's a great explanation.

Blumenthal: I mean, it's the essence. There are details—

Reti: Well, I'm sure you did a lot more in your classes than I could understand.

Blumenthal: But that was the essence of the argument. So I knew even as a graduate student that there was this weird phenomenon in clusters of galaxies called missing mass. When you measure the mass of a cluster of galaxies of maybe ten thousand galaxies clustered together, the mass that you find when you look at all the motions of the galaxies is about twenty times bigger than the mass you get when you just add up all of the mass of all of the galaxies that you see. So we knew there was this funny thing that was called the Missing Mass Problem, which had been around since the 1930s. But nobody really knew what to do with that.

And when they discovered x-rays from clusters of galaxies, we soon realized—I think we were actually among the first to point this out—that the amount of mass in x-ray-emitting gas in clusters of galaxies, rich clusters of galaxies, exceeds the mass in all the galaxies themselves. So a portion of the missing mass was just x-rays, hot, very hot, ten million degree gas that you couldn't see optically, but you could see in x-rays. So that's where we stood, at least, that's where I stood in my mind—I'm making this a personal journey—until one day I was walking through the reading room. The astronomy department had this reading room with journals and a few books and they always displayed the new journals. One day I walked in there to look at the new journals and I saw Sandy Faber. She was sitting at a table and she had piles and piles of journals open around her. It was almost like a kid building a fortress of journals.

So I said, “So, Sandy, what are you doing?”

She said, “Oh, I was asked to write an *Annual Review* article on the rotation of galaxies.”

In many fields, including astronomy, there’s this journal called *Annual Reviews*. And they invite typically fifteen authors to write a review article. Every year they put out a new volume and there’s fifteen review articles of some subjects. She and a guy at Illinois were being asked to write a review of the rotation curves of galaxies. Rotation curve of galaxies is just measuring the rotation velocity of the spiral galaxies, as you go out in the disc. I knew it was a hot topic because back in the days when I was a student, the person who did many of the measurements of rotation curves was Margaret Burbidge at San Diego. She measured hundreds of rotation curves, and they all seemed quite sensible. On the inner part of the curve, you’d see the inner part of the galaxy. On the outer part of the curve, you’d see a turnover in the curve, and then you couldn’t see beyond the turnover, but you expected it would fall off as the square root of distance, just based upon the simple laws of physics. And nobody’s doubted the laws of physics, right? So that’s what they had to be. She just got to the point of turnover.

However, there were some papers written by some radio astronomers and by Vera Rubin, who was one of Sandy’s original mentors, in the late 1970s, mid to late 1970s, which extended the rotation curves to much greater distances. And surprise of surprise, they seemed flat. The rotation velocity did not decrease with distance as we expected. We expected it to fall off, according to one of Kepler’s laws, according to one over the square root of distance. I knew there were a few papers that said that. But I’m always the skeptic. Even if I don’t know anything about the measurements, I generally tend to be skeptical, because I’ve seen so many wrong observations that later get proven wrong.

Anyway, so I said to Sandy, I said, “So you don’t believe any of that stuff about the flat rotation curves, do you?”

She said, “No. It can’t be right.”

So I went off on my merry way. And lo and behold, a day or two later I was back in the reading room and Sandy was still surrounded by her fortress of journals.

Reti: (laughs) I love that image.

Blumenthal: I said to her, “So, Sandy, how’s your *Review* article coming?”

And she said, “It is amazing, George. It’s true. The evidence is overwhelming. This is true.”

And by the way, she did finish that *Review* article with Jay Gallagher and published it and it became very, very influential when it came out. But anyway, she told me it was true. I remember walking out of there in a daze thinking oh my God, Sandy Faber, who I had huge respect for—and by the way, Sandy’s one of those people, no matter what her preconceived notions are, she’s one of those people who’s always led by the evidence. She’s one of the least preconceived notion-driven people I know. So I remember thinking, if Sandy Faber says this is true, why don’t I just assume it’s true?

But then think about what it means. And I wasn’t alone. People had already thought about the idea that there was some form of matter in galaxies called dark matter, which was responsible for this flatness of the rotation curve. In other words, that galaxies were at least ten times more massive than all of the stars that we can see in the galaxy.

Almost simultaneously when all of this happened, I happened to run into Joel Primack in physics. Joel had been thinking about supersymmetry, which was a new kind of symmetry in physics which was introducing new kinds of particles within physics. One of the new kinds of particles that had been recently discussed was the gravitino, it was called. Joel

pointed out that this could be the lightest super symmetric particle. And of course, if it was the lightest supersymmetric particle, and if supersymmetry was a good symmetry, which means that it's preserved during decays, then the lightest super symmetric particle can't decay into anything because there's nothing lighter that the supersymmetric particle can decay into.

So there was evidence that the gravitino might have a mass, I think, of about a kilo electron volt, whatever that means. And we quickly worked out that if that were true, that would give a natural scale in the universe for galaxies. So we published a paper on that with a guy named Heinz Pagels, and then began to think more about it, and realized that because it gave a natural scale for structure in the universe about the size of our galaxy, that wasn't still very satisfying. Because what about smaller galaxies? We knew there were galaxies much smaller than our own and those couldn't easily form from this mechanism.

Then we went and looked at the literature. Joel was really good at that. Joel is one of those people who loves to read all the articles before he dives in. I'm more inclined to jump into the lake before I look at how deep it is. (Reti laughs) But anyway, we read a bunch of articles from the Russians, who were working actively on the hypothesis that there is dark matter, and that the dark matter is neutrinos. We knew that there were neutrinos in the universe. Neutrinos were a well-known particle. On theoretical grounds, no one doubted that neutrinos filled space from the early universe. There was a thermal background of neutrinos, just as there was of photons or light. And so, if those neutrinos had a mass, since neutrinos are very weakly interacting particles—they essentially don't interact with anything, except through gravity—therefore this might be the dark matter. The Russians were actively working on this and had written a whole bunch of papers about neutrino dark matter.

But, just as the gravitino had a scale producing objects of the order of our galaxy, neutrinos also have a scale. And their scale is bigger than superclusters. We call it supercluster scale. So if neutrinos were the dark matter, then the first things that were collapsed, that were produced in the universe, were supercluster size globs.

Reti: How big are those?

Blumenthal: A super cluster might be ten thousand of our galaxies. And the only way you could get down to a galaxy size is if somehow a supercluster collapsed and then differentiated into smaller kinds of objects, smaller and smaller objects.

But then that didn't explain the question of why are galaxies only between ten to the eighth (10^8) and ten to the twelfth (10^{12}) solar masses in size? There was a well-defined mass range for galaxies. So I just never thought that the neutrino model had anything to teach us until Joel pointed out to me that in fact the gravitino that we had thought about originally might solve the galaxy problem. But we quickly realized that there was the possibility of a different kind of particle called the photino, which is the supersymmetric partner of the photon, which could itself be the lightest supersymmetric particle. And it would be much heavier. It would be the opposite of the neutrino. It would be very cold.

Reti: But this is just a hypothetical.

Blumenthal: It was all hypothetical.

Reti: You haven't seen these particles—

Blumenthal: We still haven't seen these particles.

Reti: —in a linear accelerator or anywhere like that.

Blumenthal: Nope. They're still looking. In fact, there are experiments going on right now in the large Hadron collider to look for photinos, as we speak. So maybe they'll be discovered. Maybe not. We know also of other alternatives for cold dark matter. It doesn't have to be the photino. I'm somewhat agnostic on the question of what it is, as long as it exists.

Anyway, so we started thinking about that. Of course, the reason something like cold dark matter solves this problem that I mentioned to you before about the microwave background is that at the time of recombination, or at the time when hydrogen went from being ionized to neutral—I said before that if the matter was to have as big fluctuations as we need to form galaxies, then the radiation has to show that fluctuation as well. And we don't see that. But what if at the time of recombination, there were fluctuations in the dark matter, but not in the ordinary matter, not in the electrons and protons, the ordinary stuff that we're made of. Because now we're talking about dark matter being ten times more common, more massive in the universe, than ordinary matter.

Reti: Wow. So most of the universe would be dark matter.

Blumenthal: Most of the universe would be dark matter. So what if the dark matter had the fluctuations, but the ordinary matter didn't? Well, it was obvious. What would happen is that after recombination, the dark matter would start forming into blobs. And eventually the ordinary matter would start falling into those blobs and become non-uniform as well. So this is a way of having your cake and eating it, too, of having relatively small fluctuations in the microwave background, and yet having fluctuations big enough to form galaxies by today.

Reti: Oh. And that would be because of gravity, that it would start to fall into—

Blumenthal: They form today because of gravity. And it's gravity that pulls in the ordinary matter into the clumps of dark matter. And there's a reason why the ordinary matter should have zero fluctuations at recombination. It's called radiation damping. It's a well-known mechanism. And so, in fact, you would expect that to happen. Really, it's the most natural thing in the world. But it doesn't happen to dark matter, because dark matter doesn't interact with radiation.

So we quickly realized that this was a solution to the galaxy formation problem. So that solved the second problem.

The first problem was the absence of a good model, or a good understanding of why there could be fluctuations. And when we did our work, there were two ways of thinking about this: one observationally and one theoretically. The observational approach was what I think of as the Zel'dovich argument, which was you can look at all of the observations in the universe and conclude that the original non-uniformities had to be scale-free. There couldn't be one scale in them. It had to be scale-free. That's well and good. You could make an observational argument, but that doesn't explain why.

There'd never been a good explanation why, until Alan Guth came up with the idea of inflation. Inflation envisions an early universe in which the universe expands exponentially and then ultimately stops expanding exponentially and cools. And because of the cooling, you can basically get, in a natural way, fluctuations in the density of the universe. And those fluctuations have their origin in quantum physics.

So with inflation, the idea is that there's a natural explanation for how you can get fluctuations that have roughly the scale-free-ness that you expect. It doesn't predict in a natural way what the size of those fluctuations are, so that's still unknown. But it does

predict the right scaling of them, and it does predict that they exist. That was a tremendous advance.

So suddenly we had confidence that there was some mechanism that existed, that would start the process. And we knew how it could go along and avoid the problem of having too much microwave background fluctuations. So we started calculating what the fluctuations in a cold dark matter universe should be. Now, we weren't the first people to do this. It was done by Jim Peebles at Princeton. But he did a really rough calculation. I ultimately did a much more careful and precise calculation of those fluctuations. And what Joel and I decided that we needed to do was to relate those fluctuations to our present-day universe. And to do that we enlisted the help of Sandy Faber, who had the data on galaxies. So we envisioned a situation where a galaxy would form because there were dark matter fluctuations at the time that hydrogen combined. Those dark matter fluctuations would then pull in the ordinary matter, the barionic matter because of gravity. They would quickly become similarly non-uniform. And then the clumps would grow in amplitude and ultimately collapse. But they wouldn't collapse fully to nothing because the dark matter doesn't interact with itself. And once something starts to collapse that doesn't interact with itself, it gets bigger velocities and the collapse stops. So the collapse of such a system would only be to about half of its maximum radius because if something goes away and starts to collapse, they collide with each other, the particles gravitationally collide, and they just attain random velocities, which keep it from collapsing freely. So it should only collapse by a factor of two from its maximum size. But that's not true of the ordinary matter. Because the ordinary matter is gas and gas can emit radiation and when it emits radiation, it cools.

Reti: So are we made out of gas?

Blumenthal: We're made out of gas. And stars are made up of gas. So we would expect that the gas in this structure would cool, emit radiation, and then fall into the center. So what we would expect then is a core made up of ordinary matter, surrounded by a halo of dark matter, which is exactly what's observed. That's what a galaxy is. So it was a natural way to understand the core-halo aspect of galaxies.

So the second question was, what kind of mass range would we expect those galaxies to have? That was a much more difficult question because we had to look at how gas cools. Under what circumstances could this model of the cooling gas inside of the bigger dark matter halo really work? And that depended on the cooling function of gas. So I actually calculated that as well.

Well, Joel had the task of taking Sandy's data on galaxies and translating it into the form that we were needing it to be in. We needed the density of the galaxy, and the velocities, or the temperature of the galaxies. So he took on that task and I took on the task of both calculating the cold dark matter spectrum and calculating the cooling functions, and what regions, what areas, could actually form these core halo structures.

And so to me, I still remember the day—these are still the old days—I did my calculations on a computer. I had computer files, and I took those computer files and by hand I plotted them on a piece of graph paper. Plotting programs were not yet readily available.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: Yeah, people used to have to do stuff like that.

Reti: Yeah, I can remember that. Vaguely.

Blumenthal: So I plotted up the cold dark matter spectrum, I plotted up the cooling regions on the diagram. And then Joel came into my office, and he had translated Sandy's

data, so we just overlaid the two graphs and held it up to the light. And sure enough, it just fit perfectly, exactly where we expected it to be. That gave us the mass range of galaxies as having to be ten to the eighth, to ten to the twelfth (10^8 - 10^{12}) solar masses. It just came out in a very natural way. So not only could we get galaxies, we could get the mass range that's observed for galaxies.

So that was the origin of the cold dark matter model. Joel and I wrote up some papers. We also wrote a paper with Sandy and Martin Rees on this. And that was kind of how that began.

Reti: What was that moment like when you made that discovery?

Blumenthal: Oh, it was exhilarating. I mean, to be honest with you, I think what I said was, "No shit!"

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: We really knew we were onto something at that point.

Reti: Wow. What a moment, after all of that.

Blumenthal: That was really exciting.

Reti: Were you then called upon to do interviews with the press, more popular science kinds of magazines?

Blumenthal: Yes. There were articles written about it. We were in several books. Joel and I were on the cover of *Discover* magazine. It was an interesting cover because they sent this photographer to campus to take our picture. He needed to get the best picture possible. He took us all around campus. We spent hours with this guy. Finally, he ended

up taking a picture of the two of us sitting on what students called the Flying IUD (the Wave).

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was kind of a strange picture, because I think Joel was standing and I was seated. It made him look like a dwarf compared to me—the perspective. (laughter)

Reti: And it wasn't called The Wave at that point, which is a good thing, given you were talking about particles.

Blumenthal: (laughs) Oh, I hadn't thought of that. Never thought of that.

Reti: Yeah. A lot of people don't know it was ever called the Flying IUD. That's old folks UCSC knowledge.

Blumenthal: Well nowadays, most people probably don't know what an IUD is.

Anyway, so from there, I got really interested then in what became known as the conspiracy.

Reti: (laughs) Astrophysicists are so dramatic in your terminology. Cold dark matter, and conspiracies.

Blumenthal: Oh! I haven't talked to you about—(laughter) So, I haven't talked to you about WIMPs yet.

Reti: No, you have not.

Blumenthal: Or MACHOs.

Reti: No, you have not.

Blumenthal: So just as an aside, WIMPs stands for weakly interacting massive particles.

Reti: Ah.

Blumenthal: That's what pretty much cold dark matter is, weakly interacting massive particles. MACHOs are massive cosmic halo objects. For MACHOs, people really think about black holes as the dark matter. So for a long time, people did experiments to look to see whether or not it was possible that the halo of our galaxy was composed of MACHOs rather than WIMPs.

Reti: Okay. (laughter)

Blumenthal: And basically, MACHOs have been pretty much ruled out as the dark matter.

Reti: Very interesting gender politics around this, yes.

Blumenthal: So the dark matter's really wimpy.

Reti: And did you make up these words, or was that somebody else?

Blumenthal: No, no, no. I didn't even make up *cold dark matter*. That was done, I think, by Dick Bond.

But I got interested in something called a conspiracy, which was when you look at the rotation of a galaxy, we know that the inner part is composed of ordinary matter. We know that the outer part of the galaxy is composed of dark matter, primarily. So you would expect, naively, that when a galaxy forms, you should see some feature in its rotation curve that reflects the transition between the inner part and the outer part. But people didn't see that. People saw a flat rotation curve. So the absence of any feature became known as

the conspiracy. (said ironically) How did the dark matter and the ordinary matter conspire to not leave some mark of the transition? (Reti laughs)

So I did some work with Joel and Sandy on this, with one of our students, Ricardo Flores, on how rotation curves evolve in a galaxy. The upshot of it was that sometimes the tail can wag the dog. By that I mean what we were able to show was that when the ordinary matter falls into the core of the galaxy, even though ordinary matter might only be 10 percent of the galaxy, as it falls into the core, it does have an effect on the trajectory of the dark matter particles, so the dark matter particles react to that infall. And it turns out that reaction produces the conspiracy. So it isn't an absolute that it has to be flat—but basically it works to basically eliminate that feature. So I was really pleased about that.

Then we also did other work like on unstable dark matter. Some people speculated that dark matter was unstable and would decay. We showed at least that some simple models could possibly be right. And then after a while, Joel and I stated working apart for a while. The early evidence was strongly in favor of cold dark matter. But as more and more evidence came in, particularly on larger scales, work by Sandy Faber and others on measuring velocities, and work by others measuring some of the correlations of material on large scales, there were some chinks that developed in the armor.

One of the great successes I forgot to mention was we were able to make a clear prediction of what the fluctuations should be in the microwave background radiation. And in fact, they were exactly spot-on to what we predicted. But there did appear to be, at least in the galaxy data, and in the velocity data, some evidence of more large-scale structure than might have been thought to be the case.

So Joel began to believe that there were two forms of dark matter. He went off to investigate that. I was much too skeptical. Because remember, I'm the Occam's razor guy.

I'm the one who believes things need to be simple. So I started thinking about other problems, rather than trying to chase some of those features. The upshot is we now know that because of dark energy in the universe, that the universe does not have a critical mass of ordinary matter. It's much less than that. That automatically leads to features on larger scales that were observed. So that today there's no evidence contrary to the predictions of cold dark matter.

Reti: Okay, wait. So are you saying—

Blumenthal: So I talked about dark energy and that confused you.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: So in our paper, in our big paper together, we speculated that cold dark matter's models would work better in a universe that had a mean density of the universe somewhere below what's called the critical density, and then said that could be the case if there was, we called it a cosmological constant, but today we would call it dark matter. But it was pure speculation in the paper. We didn't really make a big deal out of it. But we did say it, as Joel constantly reminds me.

But it was subsequent to that that actually dark energy was discovered. And so people have since discovered that the universe as a whole is actually not slowing down, but is accelerating today. That's evidence for some additional component to the universe, which we now call dark energy. And in fact, dark energy we now know dominates the universe. There's more dark energy—the universe is something like 70 percent dark energy, 23 percent dark matter, and maybe 7 percent ordinary matter. So we are the 7 percent. We are a *small* constituent of the universe.

Reti: Wow. Now does ordinary matter become dark matter ever?

Blumenthal: No.

Reti: They're always separate?

Blumenthal: Well, eventually it could become black holes, or even neutron stars, or white dwarfs which could cool enough that they become essentially dark matter. So they could eventually. But certainly that's not the origin of the dark matter we see. The dark matter has to be something else.

So then I also started doing some work on something called inflation, this theory for how the fluctuations developed. This work I did with one of my post-docs, Hardy Hodges. And we came up with this (laughs). We asked the question: does inflation have to be scale-free? Because remember, I said Joel was chasing after why there were slight deviations on large scales from the simplest of the cold dark matter models. And we thought maybe this was due to inflation. Maybe it wasn't truly scale-free initial variations.

So we worked on that and we ultimately came up with a paper that showed that it was possible to come up with almost anything you wanted out of inflation, if the physics was right. We didn't know what the physics really was. Everyone had assumed it would be scale-free, which is the most natural thing. But we showed that it didn't have to be. We showed you could even reverse engineer the question, that if you measured what the variations in the universe were, the fluctuations, you could from that deduce what the underlying physics of inflation is.

I remember when we wrote the paper—remember, this was like 1990, so it was a long time ago—but I turned to my post-doc, and I said to Hardy, I said, “So, I got a great name for our paper.”

He said, “What is it?”

I said, “Why don’t we entitle it something like ‘Why Inflation is Like Alice’s Restaurant.’”
Because you can get anything you want.

Reti: (laughs). That’s good.

Blumenthal: And his reaction was, “What’s Alice’s Restaurant?”

Reti: Oh, no. Even then.

Blumenthal: Even then.

Reti: Oh, no!

Blumenthal: I felt so old even then.

Reti: Oh, God! (laughs)

Blumenthal: So we wrote that up, and that was really, really fun.

And then, again, Joel and I were working with one of our Israeli collaborators. This is work we did on one of the trips to Israel that I’ll describe later. We started doing another interesting project, which I think never got the appreciation that it deserved, although it was a hypothetical calculation.

Some astronomers, including Dave Koo in Santa Cruz, had done deep pencil beam observations through the universe. What that means is they had taken a very narrow region of the universe in several different directions, and they had done a very deep survey of galaxies along that very narrow pencil. I think Dave did four pencils, if I remember correctly, in different directions. This was work by Dave and his collaborators, the group that he was collaborating with. And they found something absolutely amazing. They found that when they just plotted out the number of galaxies that they see as a function

of distance, they saw periodicity in the signal, or what appeared to be periodicity. Now that made no sense. How could that possibly be? If we lived in a special place in the universe, then maybe everything around us is in shells and we would see periodicity. But nobody wanted to believe we lived in a special place in the universe. And yet, the data looked pretty damn good.

So we did a little project, which I thought was really, really clever. We decided to ask the question: do these observations of the pencils rule out the hypothesis that the universe started off with a normal distribution of fluctuation. So when you have fluctuations, they can be distributed anyway you want. Inflation models suggested that they should be normal, or just a bell curve of fluctuation. We decided to ask the question whether or not the observations that Koo and others had done ruled out even a bell curve, irrespective of what the spectrum looked like of fluctuations. So we decided to take the most extreme model we could think of, which was that the fluctuations all had one scale, but were distributed according to a normal or a bell curve distribution. We ran some models of such a universe. So we modeled such a universe because that was the most extreme model that satisfied the bell curve idea. And then we drilled pencils through those models and looked at the distribution of galaxies along those pencils.

Koo never claimed it was absolutely periodic. He said they were *almost* periodic. But being almost periodic is kind of like being almost pregnant, if you know what I mean. Everyone knows what periodic means, the well-defined definition. But there's a lot of ways to be almost periodic.

So we actually had to go into the literature, find some statistics, and then we developed some more statistics of our own to measure the almostness of periodicity. And we applied those measures against our models to see how frequently our pencils came up with

something as periodic as was being observed. And the answer was somewhat surprising. It turned out it came fairly often, not 50 percent of the time, but easily 10 percent of the time. So the observations that they had done in no way ruled out the possibility that the fluctuations had to be non-normal. So that was a nice little additional thing we did.

So that was sort of the research agenda on dark matter. There were other papers, but I'm not sure it's worth going into the great gory detail.

Reti: Yes. People can refer to your work.

Blumenthal: People can read what they want.

Reti: But this will give people enough of a context for how you got there, which is really great.

Sabbatical at Harvard University

So you haven't talked about Harvard. I don't know if that fits into this.

Blumenthal: Okay. So, Harvard. That was my first sabbatical. Just a little bit of background, which we can talk more about later. When Kelly and I got married, we used to joke that before we got married we were an unmarried couple living together and after we got married, we became a married couple living apart. (Reti laughs) So after we got married, she was in law school. And then after she graduated from law school, she got a job for a year in San Francisco working for a consulting firm, which I'll talk a little bit more about later. And then after that, her first law school teaching job, which is what she really wanted to do, was in Washington University in Saint Louis. So while she was at Wash U, which was two years, we commuted back and forth.

Reti: Oh. That's tough.

Blumenthal: I think we had a schedule that at least every other week, one or the other of us would fly to see the other. I knew TWA's flight schedule by heart, although I usually took the late-night flight, the overnight flight. And the reason this is relevant is because I realized that I could take a sabbatical and spend a year with her. That would have been okay. But I was reluctant to do it, because I thought there might come a time when we'd want to have children and it seemed to me the wise thing to do was to hold onto my sabbatical credits, especially since Santa Cruz, or at least my division, I guess, I think the campus, has a very liberal attitude that you can actually store up your sabbaticals. You don't have to use it or lose it. So I was saving my sabbaticals for when I really needed it for my personal life.

After two years, Kelly got a job at Hastings in San Francisco, and we realized that was as good as it was ever going to get. And so, at that point, we both realized that we could do sabbaticals. Of course, I had to wait for her to get tenure. By the time we finally took our sabbatical, it must have been around 1990; our son was four and our daughter was one. But we decided to go off to Harvard. Why Harvard? Well, I mean, it had to work out for both of us. Hastings doesn't have as liberal a sabbatical policy as UC does. Hastings is UC Hastings College of the Law, but they don't live under the regents, and they don't follow the same APM [Academic Personnel Manual] that the rest of UC does. So the rules are different there and the bottom line is they have a much less liberal sabbatical policy. But in the law world, it's frequent that faculty do visits. They basically get paid their salary. So the deal was, she made a deal to go teach at BU, Boston University Law School, and she basically got her Hastings salary for doing that.

And I went as a sabbatical, although I did something a little weird. Instead of going to the theoretical group, which probably I should have, I didn't really know them that well, but I knew the x-ray group really well, because I had been with that group. So I called up the

head of the group, Harvey Tananbaum, and he was delighted that I was coming. So I basically went and took my sabbatical with the x-ray group, which for me was a good experience. I'm glad I did it. It also gave me plenty of opportunities to interact with the theory and optical groups at Harvard.

Harvard was a great experience that year, professionally and personally. We lived in Belmont, which is near Cambridge. We rented this beautiful three-story house in Belmont. Well, I'll tell you this story, and it was really funny. For childcare when our kids were young, we had au pairs. It was this legal program where you could bring au pairs in for a year. They had to do some educational stuff, but they basically worked as an au pair. We did that like five years in a row. We always had au pairs from Norway. And that year we had an au pair. She was a very sweet young woman. So we had a three-story house that we rented, and the top floor was basically her bedroom. And so, unbeknownst to us, one day the au pair locked herself out of the house with Sarah inside.

Reti: Oh, no.

Blumenthal: Aaron was in the Radcliffe daycare center, so I took him every day to Radcliffe. Sarah's our daughter. And one day the au pair locked herself out. Sarah thought this was hilarious that the au pair couldn't get back in. The au pair was desperate. But she saw there was a guy across the street who had a long ladder.

Reti: Oh, no. (laughter)

Blumenthal: Because she was Norwegian, even if it was wintertime, she kept her window open in her room because the winter in Boston is a heatwave to a Norwegian. She asked him if he would please climb up to the third floor and let her in the house. So he did. (laughs) And she didn't tell us about it. Well, guess what? It happened again. She locked herself out a second time a few days later. So she went over to the neighbor again

and asked him to climb up to the third floor and let himself in and let her in. So he did. He was very nice.

But after the second time, in the evening, he came over to see us. He asked us if we would give him a key to the house.

Reti: (laughs) And you're like, why?

Blumenthal: (laughs) I thought that was hilarious.

Reti: That's really funny.

Reti: This is Irene Reti. I'm here with George Blumenthal for our eleventh interview together. Today is Wednesday the 28th of November 2018. So we're going to finish up talking about the Harvard sabbatical period of your life.

Blumenthal: Great. So being at Harvard was quite an interesting experience. One of the things I enjoyed most about being at Harvard was their daily coffee for the huge organization. Well, maybe I should stop for a second and explain. Harvard's Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics was huge. It encompassed the department; the Smithsonian Center; and the old Harvard College observatory. They were all combined into one space and it was huge. They had a lot of really good people there. They also had a huge organization, many of whom were not that good. I used to joke that the mass-to-light ratio at Harvard—

Reti: The what?

Blumenthal: Mass-to-light ratio is an astronomical term. The mass-to-light ratio at Harvard was huge compared to many institutions. They had a lot of light, but they really had a lot of mass. (Reti laughs) And they were a remarkably un-interactive group of

people, but they did have a daily coffee that was put on by their star formation group, that the whole observatory came to, or at least people from the whole observatory. It wasn't that well attended compared to the number of people there, but I went every day and interacted with people from all around the observatory. It was, for me, one of the high points of the day—just getting to interact with everyone there. There were regulars from the optical group. There was, for example, Margaret Geller and John Huchra. I won't give you a long list of names. But it led to very good conversations. And it was funny. It also led to better understanding on my part of some of the stresses within the organization at Harvard.

Margaret Geller had become quite famous at that time because she led the group that included John Huchra, to do the first Harvard Smithsonian map of the universe, which was a survey of galaxies and plotting out where those galaxies are on the sky, in terms of depth. By today's standards, it was pretty primitive. But it was the first one. And you could already see large voids in the universe and a concentration of galaxies that became known as the Great Wall. Margaret got a lot of publicity and ultimately was elected to the National Academy of Sciences for that. In fact, she was really pleased to be elected to the National Academy—I had several long talks with her—because she had been an assistant professor at Harvard and then at a certain point during her assistant professorship, they told her that she had no hope of getting tenure, which is probably true because they didn't give tenure to many people there. In fact, they rarely gave tenure. In fact, when I was there, one of the things I told the director was that it's been twenty-five years since you gave anyone tenure. Maybe you ought to do it again, at least once every twenty-five years. (laughter)

Reti: The privileges of being an outsider. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Exactly. So Margaret—they switched her over to the Smithsonian side, so she wasn't paid by Harvard anymore, she was paid by the Smithsonian. And then when she became a member of the National Academy, Harvard decided to give her a named professorship, so they brought her back on the faculty. And she took great pride in the fact that she negotiated her own deal because originally apparently they wanted to give her the named professorship without any money and she pointed out that as the first woman named professor at Harvard, it would be kind of strange for her to get no money associated with it, if every other professorship at Harvard had money associated with it. (laughs) She really got great delight in doing this. I might add that a few years earlier, I had tried to recruit her to Santa Cruz, but unsuccessfully.

But Margaret was a very controversial figure at Harvard. There were a lot of people who hated her. That really became clear to me one day at coffee when we were just having a pleasant enough conversation and Margaret and I started to have a disagreement about the issue of whether or not the data about the galaxies in the so-called CFA, Center for Astrophysics survey, should be available to the public. She argued that the answer was no because it had taken so much effort to get that survey together that she and her colleagues should be able to get all of the fruits from the results of their hard work, which was not an illegitimate point to make. I argued that the survey was paid for with public taxpayer money, that in an era of openness and transparency people should be given the right to re-analyze the data and challenge her results, and that there might be purposes for which that data could be used that she might never think of. And she would also, I think, agree that my arguments were not crazy.

So we had this little back and forth at coffee. And it spun out of control. Because all of a sudden, all these people came over and they all got on my side and started dumping on Margaret. For me, this was an intellectual exercise, you know, kind of like you stand

around a coffee machine, talk about the what ifs. But for them, somehow this was a her versus all of us kind of thing.

Reti: Were they all men?

Blumenthal: [pause] I don't know. I don't think it was purely gender. I don't think it was a gender thing. Margaret was a difficult person, is a difficult person. She's not the easiest-going person I know. But I think she's very talented, and I like her. Anyway, I was just kind of horrified. After that coffee, I made a point of going to see her in her office. I said to her, "Margaret, I don't know what happened, but I want you to know I just thought this was a conversation. I didn't think this was going to be a Dump on Margaret Day."

And she said, "I know that." She said, "I have no problem with you, George." But I really felt badly, because I felt like I had unleashed the beast, if you know what I mean. There were various levels of feuding at Harvard. It wasn't just her. There were lots of weird interpersonal dynamics there that were not healthy.

Reti: How was it for you to come from a public university to Harvard?

Blumenthal: It's a good question. I can't say that it had a big role because Harvard University is in a fairly well-defined area, for everything at Harvard except the astronomy group, which is located about four or five blocks off the main campus. So, in fact, there was almost no interaction between the astronomy group and anyone else in the university. It was almost like a freestanding organization. I rarely saw people from the physics department and people at astronomy rarely went to the main campus. I probably went to the main campus more often than anyone else in that building. So it wasn't well integrated with Harvard as a university.

Reti: So when you were talking before about the data from the galaxy study—at UCSC would it have been kind of a given that that data would be public? Or is this just something that different researchers have different opinions about?

Blumenthal: So today, it would be a given if it was taken at certain telescopes, if the data was taken at Keck Observatory, for example. We have a rule, and I don't even remember what it is—whether it's six months or a year—after a certain period of time, the data becomes public. Same is true of NASA. Same is true of most places. It probably is even the same now at the Center for Astrophysics or at the Smithsonian. But this was a long time ago, so this was before those rules came into effect. So it kind of predated them.

Reti: Right. So we have to give a historic context.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I don't think she was in violation of any rules; I was simply arguing—

Reti: No, I was wondering if that was a public/private university divide.

Blumenthal: No, I didn't see it as public versus private.

So I did work on a number of projects when I was at Harvard. I think the most interesting one came after I gave a seminar—Harvard asked me to give one of their weekly seminars—so I gave a seminar on the stuff I was working on. And I started a collaboration with an interesting group of people. Two of them were also visitors there, Tsvi Piran and Dahlia Levi from Israel, from Hebrew University, which I would later spend a sabbatical at. I only vaguely knew Tsvi beforehand. I was much closer to his colleague, Avishai Dekel. But I certainly knew who Tsvi was and I'd read many of his papers. Dahlia was his wife and a former student of his. And the third person I interacted with there was Michael Carr, who everyone called Uncle Mike, sort of an older guy who was kind of friends with everyone. He used to call me “The Rabbi.”

We started talking together, after my talk, about an idea of thinking about using the methodology that I'd been using to calculate what the biggest voids in the universe could be. The universe is full of these things that kind of look like bubbles. You saw them in the Harvard Smithsonian survey that I was mentioning a few minutes ago. Big voids. Regions devoid of galaxies. And the question was, how big can they be?

The Harvard survey found only like one or two, but we knew there would be more out there if you went deeper. So we did some calculations and we came to realize that almost irrespective of the other properties in the universe, there was a maximum size to those voids. We ultimately wrote that up as a paper. I was really pleased because some years later people did void surveys and sure enough, our prediction was bang-on. So that was kind of a cute research project. I haven't looked at this in years, but it was still kind of a fun thing.

Now, I was in the x-ray group there as I mentioned. And it's kind of funny, because the x-ray group had a culture, an environment, a climate, if you will, that was so different from the observatory as a whole. It was an island of friendliness (laughter) in a somewhat more hostile environment. A lot of that was due to the head of the group, Harvey Tananbaum, who was an old friend of mine. It was Harvey that I'd called up and asked about coming. I think he had a lot to do with it. He was also a survivor of the old American Science and Engineering controversies. I told you about the Solinger controversy, when Solinger got fired. Harvey was there and Harvey was, at the time, really upset about the culture that had developed. I think he carried it over when he became the leader of the group. He put in practice what he preached. Harvey was and is a really good person, as well as an excellent scientist and leader. So it was actually a very, very pleasant place to be.

They gave me an office. It was a very fine office. I was pleased to have an office. But it turned out it was the office that had been occupied by Cliff Stoll a guy who years earlier had worked at Lawrence Livermore Labs. When he was at Lawrence Livermore Labs, he was one of the relatively minor computer technicians there. But he's one of those guys who just doesn't like mysteries. And somehow at the lab, they had a charging system. So if you were a scientist there, you got charged for the computer time you used; even if it wasn't real money, you got charged. When at the end of the day he added up all the charges, there was a discrepancy of something like 57 cents. It just didn't work. He couldn't get it to work. And he's one of these guys who just can't let something like that go. Make a long story short, he did a lot of research, a lot of studying, and discovered that someone from the outside, from Eastern Europe, was accessing the Lawrence Livermore computers.

Reti: Oh, my gosh!

Blumenthal: He had uncovered a spy network. So he wrote a book, and it became a bestseller book, about this experience. But anyway, after Livermore, he quit and he went to Harvard and he worked for the x-ray group at the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and he worked there for some period of time. I gather from people that it wasn't a great success. He probably knew more than almost anyone else about computers. He knew a lot, but he was so involved with his own stuff that he wasn't as involved in the kind of work that they needed to get done. That group is a very goal-oriented group, as they should be. So he eventually left and went back to California. But I was put in his office. (Reti laughs)

Why does that matter? Well, it matters because I also had his phone. I got more calls that year that were intended for him than I got that were intended for me. And it ran the

gamut. It was really kind of funny. I got calls from the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon. I got calls from magazines. I got calls from computer hackers. In fact, one day I was there—somehow I think it was a Saturday—for some reason, there weren't many people around. But I got this call from this person who was haranguing me, haranguing me in the most awful way, and threatening me. I think he must have called the operator at Harvard and gotten through to me through there. I later talked to the operator and she said, "That was not a nice person." (laughs) I said, "No kidding." I called the police.

Reti: Whoa.

Blumenthal: I thought the call was threatening. I notified the police. Whenever I had messages for him—I think I must have had his email address, so I just passed along the messages to him via email.

Then one day out of the blue, he walked into my office. He was visiting. (laughter) By then he was quite famous. He had been on late night TV; he'd been all over the place. He was an interesting character. He walked into my office, sat down. We had a conversation. I walked him down the hall and stuff. Throughout that entire time, he had a yoyo and he was constantly doing his yoyo. (laughter) That's distracting. But I was watching him. I had a sense that he was trying to create an image more than it was an obsession. I didn't really think he was doing this yoyo as an obsessional thing. I think it was conscious, that he was trying to create an image of weirdness. I could be wrong. I don't know. It was purely a guess. I only met him twice in my life. That was the first time.

And then a year or two later, he came out here. Sandy Faber and I and a couple of other people had lunch with him because he wanted to write a book about the Keck Observatory. So we had lunch with him. I don't think he ever wrote the book. They even made a TV movie about him. I remember I watched it and I was struck by kind of how his relationship

with his girlfriend or wife decayed during this period of time. God, you remember these things. That was certainly a weird, interesting time. It was wonderful. I mean, it is great to take a sabbatical. It was my first sabbatical, going to Boston. I had lived in Boston as a postdoc. But I thought it was fantastic. We lived in a nice neighborhood—it was certainly a residential-type neighborhood and felt very safe, yet we were close to all of the stuff in Boston. We did a lot of stuff. We went to plays; we went to movies; we took our kids places. Kelly decided to teach Aaron to ice skate. There was an ice skating rink down the block from us, so he learned to ice skate. That was where she took him to his first movie. I remember that because she said that he was really excited; this was the first time he was going to a movie in a theater. They went, they sat down and the lights were turned down. And all of a sudden, he piped up and said, “Hey, the lights just went off! How do they expect me to see anything?” (laughter)

Reti: That’s so cute.

Blumenthal: We got to do fun things. We took trips up to New Hampshire and Vermont at the time of the leaves changing. That was really tough, because we tried to get a reservation. There were five of us: the two kids and the two of us and the au pair. The hotels throughout New England were full. We got a cancellation, somehow, so we were able to get a hotel up there. It was really crowded and there was so much traffic. And the guy at the hotel was telling us, he said, “You think this is bad,” he said, “two weeks from now when the leaves are all down, you could lie down across the road for an hour and not get hurt.” (laughter) I thought that was an interesting way to put it.

Reti: It’s quite an image. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But it was certainly a great year for us in Boston. There were so many things to do, and we tried to do them all. It really brought home to me how, you know,

here we are—we live in the Bay Area. There's a lot of stuff I still haven't done. I'm almost embarrassed to tell you I've never been to the Mystery Spot.

Reti: I haven't, either. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I went once, but you couldn't get in. Never been to the Mystery Spot, and yet this is where I live. When you go away, you try to do everything. It's such an interesting phenomenon.

Aaron was at the Radcliffe daycare center, which was great. I really liked them. I thought they did a fantastic job. I'm not sure how we managed to get him in there, but we did. And it was great, because it was really close to me. So I could pick him up and drop him off. Harvard was maybe two miles from where we lived, so it wasn't that far, even.

Reti: Perfect.

Blumenthal: I was really pleased also because my mother and my sister came out to visit while we were there. That was quite special. My mother didn't travel very much, so getting them to come out from Sacramento was special. After my father died, a year or two, maybe a year after my father died, my sister and her husband decided to move to New York. So they left Milwaukee, they moved to New York and lived in Brooklyn in a section of Brooklyn called Canarsie. And soon thereafter, my mother moved out to Brooklyn as well. So they completely abandoned Milwaukee. My brother-in-law worked on Orchard Street in Manhattan selling clothes. It was quite remunerative. He even had an opportunity to buy a store there, which he would have gotten financing for, from his uncle. And so he went through kind of a crisis of what he wanted to do with his life and decided he didn't like living in New York. They decided to move out to Sacramento and my mother went with them.

During the time I was there, the then-director of the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Irwin Shapiro was his name, contacted me and asked me to serve on a committee there to evaluate proposals. He had some millions of dollars in a bank account. It was burning a hole in his pocket. He wanted to spend it. So he put together a group to look at proposals, and he asked me to serve on that group. I was happy. If they were going to extend their hospitality to me, it seemed to me that was the least I could do. And so I did. That was interesting. I think we made some good recommendations.

And then, before I left, he asked me to come see him. And he said, “Look, you’ve been here for a year. You’ve had a chance to look us over. Do you have any suggestions for me about how we could make this place better?” I thought that was really nice of him. (laughs) So I told him, I said, “I have two suggestions to you.” I said, “The first suggestion is easy and obvious, and the second suggestion would be really difficult for you to do, but I think it would be a good thing for you to do.”

He said, “Great. Tell me about them.”

So I said, “The first suggestion is that you put the name of everybody on their office door. Just put their name on the door.” Because I had spent a year wandering the halls of Harvard Smithsonian. I’d pass all these offices with people inside. I did not have a clue who they were. Some of them were quite famous people. Some of them were people I would have been happy to knock on their door and come in and say hello and talk to them, but I just didn’t have any idea who any of those people were. So I said, “You really just need to have names on every office. That would be so easy to do, and that would conform to the norms of society.”

He said, “Okay, okay.” He was receptive to the idea. But later either I learned—he may have told me or maybe somebody else told me—they actually thought about making that

change, at my suggestion, but so many people objected that they backed away. It was a matter of safety. Safety was not an illegitimate concern, and I'll come back to that in a minute. But I thought that was a silly reason. How could having your name on the door be unsafe? I think the pluses far outweighed any potential negatives. But it was part of the culture.

Reti: Were there students coming to their offices? Were these teaching faculty?

Blumenthal: There were students occasionally coming to our offices, sure. But they would have office numbers. There were numbers, but no names. I'm sure somebody must have had a list of names and offices and maybe I could have even gotten that list. But when you're walking down the hall—

So that was my easy suggestion. My hard suggestion was they had just completed a brand-new building across the street. So they had gone from one big building complex, which was a very large building complex, to two buildings. And they decided to move their radio astronomy and their infrared astronomy group into the building across the street. I told Irwin, "I really wouldn't do that. I would really urge you not to do that. What you really should do, is you should identify the most productive people in the observatory and keep them all in this building. Keep them all in the same place and move all of the unproductive people across the street. Keep the productive ones separated from the unproductive ones. If you put somebody across the street and they become productive, then give them the right to move back. And if somebody is in your building and they don't do much, then move them across the street. So keep separated the active people from the inactive people. It would actually lead to a much more vibrant organization."

Of course, he just laughed at me. I understand that. He didn't do it, and he was never going to do it. Honestly, if I were in his shoes, I'm not sure I would have had the courage to do it, but I think it might have been the right thing to do.

So, I should say a word about safety. Halfway through the year that we were there, there was a woman law professor at some small law school in Boston, I forget the name of it. But the women law professors in the greater Boston area got together somewhat regularly and Kelly, my wife, joined them. Well, one day this particular law professor was walking home and she was accosted and murdered on the street in Cambridge just about two blocks from the observatory, in a neighborhood that I would normally have said was very, very safe. You can imagine how people reacted to that. So when people talked about safety issues, they were on people's minds, particularly on women's minds. That murder was never solved. There was some suspicion that the husband did it. But there was also some suspicion that some street person did it. No one ever knew, or they never solved it. But there was a lot of concern and paranoia afterwards.

I remember a couple of weeks after the murder, there was a group of women law professors that got together. It may have been a memorial service of some sort. It was at somebody's home. So Kelly went to it. I had the kids in our Volvo station wagon and I was going to pick up Kelly at a certain time, or I was going to go there at a certain time and wait for her to come out. It was agreed I shouldn't try to go in and get her. This was before we had cell phones.

I went and I parked and I waited for her. I saw this car and this guy that really looked suspicious. I was trying to figure out what to do because these were a bunch of women law professors and here's this guy hanging around outside, and it just didn't look right to me.

I was really debating what to do. Then Kelly came out and she got in the car and I told her, I said, “Should we just go call the police?” And she said, “That is the police.” (laughs)

Reti: He was watching the meeting.

Blumenthal: Safety was a concern.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So I think that’s pretty much what I have to say about Harvard.

The More Personal Side of Life: Early Adventures with Kelly Weisberg

Let’s talk about the more personal side of my life. So when I moved to Santa Cruz, I was single. My main social activity was biking with Bill Mathews. To the extent that I socialized with people locally, it was going to people’s houses for dinner. I got a lot of dinner invitations. Those were the days when a lot of faculty invited other faculty to dinner, to a greater extent than I think happens today. I think it has a lot to do with the difference in social dynamics. In those days, wives stayed home and minded the house and cooked dinner. Today, spouses have their own active lives. I think that plays a role in it.

I was so young when I got here. I was twenty-five or twenty-six when I got here. I dated, but there wasn’t a large dating pool for me in Santa Cruz. So I made an effort usually to go to San Francisco to events to see if I could meet people. Well, the irony is that when I finally met the person I married, it was more or less by accident. Well, not really. Yes and no. What had happened was my friend Jay had moved to San Francisco. Jay was the guy I went to grad school with. He moved to Mission Beach right after me. We became good friends. And then after graduating, he first went to, I think Cambridge, England. Then he did the postdoc at Berkeley. Then he got a permanent job at Menlo Park in the USGS. So

he essentially had tenure. And then he decided he didn't want to do that anymore, so he went to Harvard Law School, became a lawyer, and moved to San Francisco.

He had just moved to San Francisco. He had a girlfriend up there and I'd seen him once or twice. We'd arranged to have dinner together one night. So I drove up to San Francisco thinking I was going to have dinner with Jay. But unbeknownst to me, Jay had decided that he was going to fix me up with this woman (Reti laughs) who was a friend of his girlfriend. And it was Kelly. It was kind of weird, because I really hadn't planned to do this. That wasn't in my plan.

But we went out to dinner. It was actually kind of nice. We got along well. So Kelly and I dated a few times. She was living in San Francisco because—this is complicated—she had gotten her undergraduate degree in sociology from Brandeis. Then she had gone to UCSF in their PhD program in sociology. They had a very famous program in sociology at the time. So she had been there for a year, but she was unsatisfied with the program. She took a master's degree there and went back to Brandeis to get her PhD. So she spent a year at Brandeis. Then when she was writing up her dissertation, she decided to come out to California to write her dissertation. She was living in San Francisco with a friend of hers, writing her dissertation. So we dated a little bit but it kind of cooled off because she had another guy she was seeing and I wasn't all that interested in being in some competitive situation. I kind of backed away for a few months.

Meanwhile Jay and his girlfriend decided that we were the perfect couple. (Reti laughs) So they did everything to get us back together, and get us moving. They invited us to parties where we were together. I remember one party where I really didn't have anyone to talk to except her. And one day, Kelly took the lead and she wrote me an actual letter, like a snail mail letter, saying that she had some tickets to a Rostropovich concert in San

Francisco and was I interested. So I called her up and told her I was interested and we started dating again. Then it took off. We started seeing each other a lot. Then, somewhat to my surprise, Kelly agreed to go with me on a six-week bicycle tour of Europe. Bicycling wasn't really her thing. She was willing to try it, willing to do it, but it really wasn't her thing. I suggested we bicycle through the Alps, but Kelly thought Denmark was more sensible.

Reti: That's a huge commitment.

Blumenthal: I remember her mother even called me up at one point and said, "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" (laughter) But we did it and it was great. We spent two weeks bicycling between castles in the Loire Valley. And we'd camp in campgrounds usually, occasionally staying in a cheap hotel. We stayed in campgrounds. Then the plan was to go to Czechoslovakia and bicycle there for a couple of weeks. The reason I had chosen Czechoslovakia was because there was no literature on bicycling in Czechoslovakia.

Reti: This is before the Iron Curtain fell.

Blumenthal: The Iron Curtain was still there. Absolutely. I guess I learned why there was no literature. (Reti laughs) So it was kind of an interesting experience. We showed up and we went to Prague. We kind of figured we'd just get a hotel when we got to Prague. No big deal. We took a train. In fact, that was an experience as well because we took a train from—must have been from Lyon to Prague. But it was one of those trains where partway through the journey the train splits in two and one half goes to one place and one half goes to another. Well, ours didn't go to Prague. Our half went to Geneva. We ended up in Geneva, kind of puzzled about how we got there, since we were pretty sure we had gotten on the train to Prague. (laughter) But we finally figured out what had happened.

People thought we were really stupid not to know which train to get on. By the way, Kelly speaks fluent French. She lived in France for a year as a student. So it wasn't language. It was just a lack of transparency.

Anyway, we got another train to Prague. We show up at Prague. We had some interesting and weird experiences there. The weird experience was that we got off the train and some guy kept following us and telling us he would take care of us and he would make sure we got to a hotel. It took me a while to realize that he was probably secret police and we were obviously weird because we were Americans; we had bicycles with us; etcetera. So finally we got rid of this guy and we went to the first hotel on our list of the ten best cheap hotels to stay at in Prague. We show up at this hotel and ask for a room and they were very reluctant to give it to us. They said, "We have to make some calls." Literally, they were on the phone for half an hour. At the end of a half hour they said, "We can give you a room." I don't know what all took place. But it was all very strange.

But we enjoyed spending a couple of days in Prague. It was a very, very interesting experience. Kelly took me on a tour of the Jewish quarter of Prague. And again—maybe step back for just one second—when Kelly was a student in Paris she took a vacation in Prague not long after the Russian invasion. When the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia, virtually all the Jews in Czechoslovakia fled. The ones that stayed behind were mostly older people. Kelly, when she went there, took a tour and she started asking questions on the tour. She said that got them very suspicious about her. When she was asking questions of the tour guide, the tour guide said, "I can't answer, but this person over there can." Turned out it was the head rabbi. So they took her to the head rabbi of Prague and he was very suspicious of her. So he asked her who she was and why was she asking all these questions. She was explaining: she was Jewish; she was from Pittsburgh; she was interested. She had family that had been lost in the Holocaust. So he said, "How many

Jews are there in Pittsburgh?” She said, “I don’t know.” He just couldn’t believe she wouldn’t know how many Jews there were in Pittsburgh. But she understood why they were afraid.

So anyway, she took me on a tour of the Jewish quarter, which was interesting to see as well. We also met a young couple at a restaurant. They were very nice. They invited us to their home. We met their families. I thought they were so nice and so pleasant. But when it came time to go, to leave Prague, Kelly’s knee was hurting her. She had injured it bicycling and it wasn’t yet healed. So we had a long discussion, a long debate and finally we decided that she would take a train to Vienna and stay in Vienna, and I would bicycle alone from Prague to Vienna. When we were in Prague, we had stopped by the American embassy because I wanted to ask them if there was any reason why we couldn’t bicycle from Prague to Vienna. And they basically said, “No, it’s fine, you can bicycle anywhere you want.” “But,” they said, “There are all these no stopping zones next to military installations. You cannot stop next to a military installation.” They said when Americans have problems, that’s often the problem that they get into. So we said fine.

Anyway, I learned why there weren’t books on bicycling. Number one, there were lots of no stopping zones, and they were all on up-hills. Number two, I did not appreciate the number of cobblestone streets and highways. It is really hard to bicycle with a light bicycle over cobblestone.

And third, my plan had been to camp. In Czechoslovakia at that time, it was legal to camp anywhere you wanted to. You could camp on a farmer’s field. It was perfectly legal. But you had to register with the police every day you were in the country. If you were staying at a hotel or at a campground, they would register you for the police. So it was really

important for me to get to a campground because I didn't want to deal with registering with the police.

But I couldn't find the campgrounds. They weren't where they were shown on a map. I had a map, and I could read a map, and the campgrounds just weren't where they were supposed to be. At one point, I got really panicked because it was starting to get dark. There was a little tiny train station. I went into the train station and they were really nice in there. They talked to me about where I was. They noticed I had a water bottle, which you always have when you bicycle; they wanted to fill it with schnapps. I wouldn't let them because I don't drink and it's the last thing you should drink when you're bicycling.

And all these conversations were in German, because I didn't speak Czech and I do speak German. So I asked them how to find the campground. They didn't know. So one of them went to the phone and said, "I'm going to call the police." So he's calling the police and I'm saying, oh my God, he's calling the police! But he was just calling the police to find out where the campground was. They found out and they gave me directions and it worked. I did get to the campground. So everything was fine with that.

The other thing about Czechoslovakia and that bicycle trip, which only lasted a few days, was I was always hungry. In Czechoslovakia, you go into a restaurant, they of course have the price next to every item, but they also have the mass in grams. Because the portions were nationalized. They were the same portions in all restaurants because the restaurants were all nationalized. It's a communist country. And they were never big enough for me.

Reti: You were riding uphill over cobblestones and you're a big, tall guy.

Blumenthal: Exactly. So I remember one day I was going through some town—I think it was Tábor—and I saw a factory letting out and the workers going off to lunch. I thought, I know what I'll do, I'll follow the workers. I'll eat where they eat. So I went into this

restaurant where all the workers were going. They served all kinds of stuff. I thought oh, this is fantastic! It looks like fish and chicken and stuff. Well, the stuff that I thought was fish was a dumpling. And the stuff I thought was chicken was fried potatoes. It was just a really starch-heavy diet, but it was a lot of it. It was okay. The hunger wasn't that big a deal, but it was just noticeable.

Then I had to leave the country. I got near the Austrian border. And that was unbelievable. The border crossing that I went through was the smallest border crossing out of Czechoslovakia. It was on the Austrian border. I had no idea what it was going to be like. But as I was bicycling toward the border (I was still a couple of miles away), all of a sudden in the middle of the road—and there was no traffic on the highway, there were no cars on the highway—there was a soldier. He had a machine gun strapped to his back and a big stop sign on a pole.

As I bicycled up to him, he held up his stop sign and he said, "Could I see your papers, please?" So I gave him my passport and my visa. He was looking them over. And this car comes along. It's coming along fast. So he grabs his pole and he holds up his stop sign. The car zips past him. So he very calmly puts down the stop sign, takes his tommy gun off of his back and aims it down the road. The car screeched on its brakes and skidded down the road to a complete stop, and then backed up all the way to where we were and then got in line in back of me.

Then he calmly handed me back my passport and visa and told me, "Alles in ordnung." And let me go on. I thought, that can't be the border. And it wasn't. Because a couple of miles later, I started getting to the border. The border was several layers of barbed wire. The first layer had machine guns at the barbed wire. And then beyond that was the main border crossing area on the Czech side. So I bicycled up to this main area and there were

a bunch of guards there. There must have been a half dozen guards, at least. One of them came over to me and asked me for my passport and visa. I gave it to him and he took them away. I said, "You're taking them away!"

He said, "No problem. I'll bring them back." He said, "But you go change your money." Because you can't bring Czech money out of the country. So I changed my money. He was gone a long, long time. Oh, and there were a couple of guards that were taking apart a car there. They had taken off the doors and taken out the seats looking for God knows what.

Finally, he came back. He came over to me and he said, "You're fine. Everything's approved and you can go now."

I said, "Do you want to search my panniers?"

He laughed. He said, no, he didn't. And he said, "You can go now."

So I thought about it for a second, and then I carefully went around and I said goodbye to every one of the guards because I wanted everybody to know my intention was to get on the bicycle and start pedaling. I didn't want anybody to be surprised. So I bicycled to the Austrian side of the border.

I felt this huge sense of relief when I was in Austria. I can't even describe it. I felt like this weight was lifted from my shoulders. The ride from the border to Vienna, I don't even remember very well, because it was such an anticlimax. But Kelly and I met up in Vienna. We stayed there a few days. Then we took a train to Copenhagen and we bicycled around the whole, all of Denmark for a couple of weeks. Then we came home.

It was a really nice trip. I spent a lot of time on that trip. But it was worth it. After that, we talked about it and decided to live together. I think for Kelly that was not an easy decision, because it meant leaving her friend that she was rooming with in San Francisco. But she

did. We moved into a place on Seabright, which was great. We loved that Seabright apartment. We told the landlord we were married because he would not have rented to us had he thought we were an unmarried couple living together. So we lied. I'll own up to it. But that was the culture of the time.

Reti: Was it unusual at that time for faculty, male faculty, to be partnered or married to a woman who had her own career?

Blumenthal: Relatively, well, this was 1976. So it was less unusual than it was before, but it was still not the norm by any means.

Reti: Yes. Was that hard for Kelly, socially?

Blumenthal: I think there have been periods when it's been hard. I don't think that year was particularly hard because we weren't yet married, so there was a certain looseness to it all. I don't think there were as many expectations. After we did get married, I think she felt that there were sometimes expectations that were unrealistic.

Reti: Yes, I would imagine, and we'll return to that topic, as you become chancellor.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So we lived together for a year in the Seabright apartment. And at the end of the year, we decided to get married. That was an exciting time. I remember that was also the time when I got tenure. Kelly's mother was visiting us when I got the letter. I got this letter. Kelly's mother wasn't an academic, so she didn't necessarily know the profound implications of tenure. So I showed her the letter. It was a letter from the chancellor, Angus Taylor. And it ended with, "We look forward to a long and profitable relationship with you." I was trying to explain to Ruth, my mother-in-law, that that meant that I couldn't be fired unless I did something really, really, really bad, and that I essentially had a job for life.

She looked at me and she said, “You got all that from, ‘We look forward to a long—’” (laughter) I explained to her there were rules governing this sort of thing. The chancellor didn’t have to write it in the letter.

So then the question became, how would we get married? I would have been fine just going off to Las Vegas and getting married. (Reti laughs) That would not have been okay with Kelly. I really didn’t want a spectacle, but I could have lived with it. But there was a real dilemma because my mother lived in Sacramento; Kelly’s mother lived in Pittsburgh; we lived in Santa Cruz. Our friends were spread all over, too, between San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and God knows where.

So it turns out that that summer, the summer we got married, we were both going to go to England. I was going to a long conference or workshop at Cambridge University and Kelly was going to take some courses at Oxford University. Kelly was already in law school. So let me just put a pin where we are at the moment and just backtrack momentarily.

We did have a crisis because Kelly did get her PhD. But jobs for new PhDs in sociology were not exactly easy to get. She and I wanted to stay together. She decided that since she had done a fair amount of work on sociology of law, that it would be a good idea to get a law degree. So she applied to a bunch of law schools. She had taken a class at Hastings College of the Law from a very famous professor named Jerome Hall, who was quite old. He was a member of their Over 65 Club. They hired people after they retired from other universities. So he must have been in his eighties. She had taken a class from him at Hastings while she was living in San Francisco.

So she applied to a bunch of different law schools. And unfortunately, it wasn’t a great success. She wasn’t getting into the ones she wanted. She finally got into the University of

Wisconsin Law School, so she tentatively decided that that might be where she would go, which I was not thrilled about.

And then she got waitlisted at Berkeley. So I urged her, since she had not gotten a letter from Jerome Hall, and he was so well known, I said, “Why don’t you get Jerome Hall to write you a letter?” So she did. She got him to write a letter to Berkeley. Right after that letter went out, she got notified that she was accepted at Berkeley. So she decided to go to Berkeley. So through much of that year that we lived together, Kelly was commuting to Berkeley, to the law school. I think we must have lived together before then as well, because I do remember in the apartment helping her to study for the LSAT, the law school exam, which in those days had two sections: one section on mathematics and one section on reading graphs, graphical interpretation. And neither of those were her strong points, so I did a lot of tutoring to help her come up to speed on that.

Anyway, so back to the main story. We were going to be in England. We decided why don’t we just get married in England? So she discovered this synagogue in London, called the West London Synagogue, which was I think one of the oldest and best known synagogues in London, and had a very famous rabbi. It was the place where people in Israel went to get married because if you’re in Israel, you can only get married if you’re orthodox. If you’re Reform, there’s no option to get married there. So couples will go to London, or many of them go to London to get married. And this was a Reform synagogue, which I didn’t realize at the time. Reform in London is a whole lot different than Reform in California. But that’s a whole other story.

Anyway, so she arranged it all. The big honcho rabbi couldn’t be there, but another rabbi, Rabbi Blue was there, his assistant rabbi. We did lots of correspondence with him, got everything arranged. So when we got to England, our first stop was at the synagogue to

meet with this woman who'd arranged it all, and just to make sure everything was on track. And it was. I asked this woman whether we needed blood tests. She looked at me very puzzled and she said, "In Great Britain, we are quite prepared to believe you have blood." (laughter) I think in those days, it was required in California. It might even still, I don't think it is anymore. In those days, it was. Anyway, the idea was that we would establish residency in Cambridge, or I would establish residency in Cambridge. We'd get a license and then get married at the synagogue. So Kelly went off to Oxford; I went off to Cambridge. I think I visited her a couple of times in Oxford. During the course of those few weeks, I gave a paper at Cambridge, and all that.

Kelly's course finished a few days before we were ready to leave Cambridge, so she came to stay with me. We went to the registry office in Cambridge shire to get a license. Another little old lady was there. Very nice. She took down all of our information. I was so amused, because she listed Kelly as "spinster." She took lots and lots and lots of information on us. Then she said, "And where will you be getting married?"

We said, "In London."

And she said, "No."

We said, "What do you mean, no?"

She said, "You can't get married in London. I can't give you a license to be married in London."

We started to argue with her. We said, "Of course you can."

She said, "No, the law is very clear. You have to get married in the shire in which you've established residency."

I said, “Well, wait a minute. What about people whose kids have gone off to live elsewhere and then they want to have their wedding at their parents’ home?”

She said, “There’s an exception for that.” But she said, “I can’t allow you to get married if it’s not in this shire.” We kept arguing with her. Finally, she got very exasperated with us and threw us out of her office. She said, “I’m sorry.” Kelly is a somewhat assertive person, and she was really trying to argue. (Reti laughs) Finally the woman said, “I’m so sorry, but I have to ask you to leave.” She was getting a little annoyed with us.

So we get up to leave. And as we’re walking out the door, Kelly kind of plaintively says, “But we’ve arranged it all with the rabbi and everything!”

The woman said, “Wait a minute. Come back.”

So we went back. We sat down. She looked at us and she said, “May I ask, are you of the Jewish persuasion?” Those were her exact words. “Are you of the Jewish persuasion?” We said yes. She said, “No problem then.” (laughter) Turns out there was another exception to the law because there were so few, or maybe nonexistent rabbis in that shire.

So we filled out all the paperwork and took it to London, and we got married. The witnesses were two witnesses off the street and the rabbi was very nice. By the way, he had insisted that we come to London a week or so before to interview with him to make sure that we weren’t doing this for the wrong reasons or something. But it was pretty obvious we were two mature people and had thought this through. So we got married at the synagogue in London. It was a very, very nice experience.

And this is so out of order, but I will just say that forty years later we were in London. This was last summer. The summer before last we were in London on vacation and we spent our anniversary in London and we decided to go back to the synagogue again.

So that was also a trip. We had no trouble finding it, but when we got there, the first thing we noticed was a guard out front. The guard wanted to know what we were doing there. I think we went on a Saturday for services. He was very suspicious of us. So we explained to him we'd been married there forty years earlier. That made him even more suspicious. Finally, he called somebody inside the synagogue and they gave him permission to let us in. (laughs) So we went in the synagogue and we met the rabbi, who was a woman. She was very near retirement, but she was already a very famous woman rabbi in England. And it turned out Rabbi [Lionel] Blue, who had married us, had been the main rabbi for that temple for many, many, many, many years and he had just died the year before. He was also the first gay rabbi in England. So anyway, so we went to the services. It was all very, very nice. In fact, she invited us up to the bima as distinguished visitors. It was really quite pleasant to go back there forty years later.

So we still had a few days in England. I don't know, five or six days in England. We hadn't planned anything. And even for the wedding, we didn't plan much. The day before the wedding we went into a flower shop and we said, "We'd like to get some flowers for our wedding."

They said, "Sure. Delighted. When's the wedding?"

I said, "Tomorrow." And the color literally drained out of the guy's face. But it all worked out.

Then we went into a travel agency and said, "We want to plan our honeymoon."

"Great. When are you going to start it?"

We said, "Tomorrow." (laughter)

Reti: That's cute.

Blumenthal: So we decided to go to Wales for our honeymoon, to the Gower Peninsula of Wales, which is kind of off in a corner of Wales, a very isolated corner where you have to take a bus to get out on the Gower Peninsula if you don't have a car. The bus runs three times a week. I asked them, "What do you do if you miss the bus?"

They said, "You wait three days." (laughs)

So it was actually very nice out on the Gower. We stayed at a B&B. And the most notable thing about that honeymoon was the first night we were sitting around the TV with the other guests watching television and the news flash came on that Elvis Presley had died. I was really taken by how deeply the British took the death of Presley. I had no idea he had such a worldwide following.

So that was our honeymoon, several peaceful days in Wales. Oh, I guess I should complete the story. So then we flew back. Our flight was from Gatwick, I think to New York, or maybe it was to San Francisco. But we were flying back from Gatwick. And we were on a 747. And about an hour out of Gatwick, one of the engines exploded and there was a big fire on the engine.

Reti: Oh, my God, George!

Blumenthal: Which they managed to put out using whatever their fire extinguishers were. Then the pilot got on and said, "I'm so sorry, but we can fly with three engines, but the flight rules require us to turn around and go back to Gatwick." So they turned the plane around. Then about ten minutes later he got on the PA system again. And he said, "I'm so sorry, but since we took off from Gatwick, Gatwick workers are now on strike and Gatwick airport is closed, so we're going to have to fly to Frankfurt." So we flew to Frankfurt. (laughter) As I told Kelly, we at least had some excitement at the start of our marriage. It was all fine, but it was one more adventure.

And I have to say that marrying Kelly was the smartest thing I ever did. Over the many years of our marriage, she has helped me grow by an enormous amount personally. Without that growth and our partnership together, I would never have come close to becoming a chancellor. So besides making me so happy, Kelly has been key to my personal and professional development.

So that was getting married. The next issue for us was career.

Kelly finished law school. Then she applied for a job on the faculty of UCSC because there was an opening in sociology and they were looking for somebody who could do sociology of law. They had two positions, so I was pretty confident that she'd get one, because she was pretty good. But she didn't. She came in number three on their list. After she didn't get the job, they called her up and said, "We really need somebody to teach for us. How about you come and teach for us?"

Reti: Be a lecturer.

Blumenthal: "We have a good record of promoting our lecturers and getting them faculty positions down the line." Somewhat to my surprise, Kelly was open to that suggestion. I was much more negative. I felt like if they weren't going to hire her when they had two positions, for her to put herself in a position of weakness and where she's a convenience, it just didn't feel right to me. I really wasn't very thrilled about this. In fairness to Kelly, I think she felt the same way I did. She just found it enticing to think that maybe if she did this, it would be a pathway. And who knows? Maybe it would have been. Though, in retrospect, I'm glad she didn't do that, and I'm glad it wasn't a pathway. I think her career was probably much more productive, given the pathway she took. Our lives are full of forks in the road, and you never know what the other fork would have brought. But I'm not dissatisfied with this particular fork.

Her first job when she graduated from law school was at a consulting firm in San Francisco. They did government consulting and they had a bunch of government contracts to do studies of various things. They were run by some people who were very talented, very good. Kelly had an interview with them and they really liked the fact that she had both a law degree and a sociology PhD. So they did this interview and they had some projects they were interested in her working on. But during the interview they asked her if she felt comfortable doing a cost benefit analysis. Did she have experience with doing cost benefit analyses? She said, "Oh, yeah. I've done them before."

The other project that they put her on was a project they were doing to examine juvenile prostitution in several U.S. cities. As a part of that they did interviews with juvenile prostitutes in three American cities—I think San Francisco and two others. They got lots of data and Kelly analyzed that data and ultimately wrote a report on it and then decided to write a book on it. The report got a lot of attention and in fact, the senate called Kelly to testify before one of the senate committees—I don't know which committee it was, maybe the subcommittee of Judiciary—on prostitution in the U.S. Her book, called *Children of the Night*, did extremely well, going through a number of printings.¹²⁶ There were some important findings in this study. One of them was that there were real differences between male and female juvenile prostitutes. Female juvenile prostitutes usually had a pimp and usually somebody got them into it and controlled them. That was rarely, if ever, the case for males. Male juveniles often were not gay but they would still engage in gay relationships. Their hope was often to find somebody rich and able to take them in and support them and able to give them stability in their home. Another finding was that virtually all of them came from homes where there was abuse. In many, many cases it was either sexual abuse or physical abuse. In some cases, it was emotional abuse. But virtually all of them came from homes that had some kind of abusive background.

She also did some studies about the effectiveness of shelters for juvenile prostitutes. So she did a lot of work on that and it was a very good study. Ultimately, she turned it into a book. She started the book when she was at Washington University and finished it when she was at Hastings. So when she got to Hastings she had all of these interviews with these young prostitutes. What she really needed was transcripts of the interviews, those recordings. She gave them to the steno pool at Hastings and asked them if they would transcribe these recordings. A few days after she gave it to the steno pool, the head of the steno pool came to her and said, "Look, I'm really, really sorry. There's going to be some delay here. I gave it to one of our people and she started to transcribe it but she just couldn't handle the language of the tapes. So I just want to assure you, I'm going to give it to my best person and she'll get it done." Kelly said fine. A few days later the head of the steno pool came to her and said, "Look, I'm doubly sorry now because the person I gave it to just couldn't handle the language either. She just can't do it. It's just too emotionally difficult. But I will do it myself and it will get done." So, the head of the steno pool did do it and did finish it.

When Kelly later was going through all the transcripts and reading them, she found some really puzzling things in there. One of the prostitutes was talking about arriving in San Francisco and going to the Tenderloin in San Francisco and being utterly astonished at how many dry cleaners there were in the Tenderloin. It was like there was a dry cleaner on every corner. She's reading this. This doesn't make sense. So she finally went back and listened to the tapes. It wasn't dry cleaners. It was drag queens.

Reti: Oh, yes. A problem I am well familiar with in oral history. Auditing is important.

Blumenthal: Obviously, the woman heard what she wanted to hear, not what was said.

Anyway, that was Kelly's first job. Meanwhile, she was also writing a book on feminist jurisprudence. She had just gotten a publisher for that book. I think that helped her when she got the job at Washington University in St. Louis. They hired her on the faculty. She was there for two years. We made an agreement we would fly back and forth on weekends and she spent summers in Santa Cruz. I guess our deal was every other weekend one of us would fly. It sounds horrible in some ways, and I was certainly not thrilled with this commuting relationship. But in other ways it was really exciting because when she was gone I got a lot of work done and I think she did too. And when I visited her—it's like we had a completely different set of friends, like leading two totally different lives in different places. So it had its excitement, too. It wasn't all negative. We just made it work. And it did work.

So anyway, back to the main story. When our son Aaron was born, Kelly was able to take a semester's maternity leave. That was great. It was lovely to have our first child. We hired someone from campus we'd met to look after him. Then we went into this au pair program that I think I mentioned earlier.

Reti: You did.

Blumenthal: And we had a series of au pairs, five au pairs from Norway, who incidentally we visited later when we went to Norway. I don't know if I told you that or not.

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: If I could again, I'm sorry to do these jumps, but I don't think I'll remember to do this later if I don't do it now.

Years later, Kelly and I were in Norway. We went there for Jerry Nelson, when he received the Kavli Award. So we decided to contact our old au pairs and go visit them. Some of them we had kept in touch with, and some of them we hadn't really done a good job keeping in touch with. Our kids helped us contact them, because our kids found them through Facebook.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: But there was one, our first au pair, Nina, who we just plain couldn't find. Nina was, in some ways, special because she was our first au pair. Nina had come from this tiny little town way in the north of Norway that had like twenty people in it. She was an orphan. Both of her parents were dead and she had been raised by her sister and brother-in-law. When she came to us, she was so, so naïve. I mean, I always thought Norway was this advanced country. She believed, when she came to us, that when a man talked to her, she had to look down. She believed she had to wear stockings at all times because the failure to wear stockings was a come-on in the United States. Where she got this, I don't know. But she soon became Americanized. She grew up quickly, was Westernized, came to understand the cultural differences soon, as young people do. And she was a special person to us because she was our first au pair. So we were really sad at not finding her. Kelly decided to write a letter. She wrote a letter to Nina Lisette care of, and she put down her sister's name. But she could only remember her sister's first name.

Reti: In this village.

Blumenthal: In this little village. She put it in the mail and mailed it. And in the letter she said, "If you're in touch with Nina, please have her contact us."

Sure enough, a few days later, she gets an email from Nina. So we get in touch. Nina has moved to Stockholm. She's married with three kids and she'd love to get together. So we arranged to get together.

Reti: That's sweet.

Blumenthal: So when we actually saw her and met her family and had dinner with her, she mentioned that this little village that she grew up in had twenty people in it, now it had ten thousand people in it. I said, "So that makes it amazing to me that this letter that was just addressed to your sister's first name actually got to her so quickly." And she said, "Well it helps when your brother-in-law is the postmaster." (laughter)

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: Nina's a delightful person. She and her family visited us and stayed with us for a few days recently.

So, when our first child was born, Kelly received a maternity leave – or more accurately, active service modified duties. When Kelly became pregnant three years later with our daughter, there was a new dean, who denied her request for maternity leave. We did not accept that decision, and what ensued was a nine month expensive dispute, that ultimately resulted in Kelly getting one semester of paid leave.

Reti: And what happened with the policy in terms of future women who wanted leaves? Do you know?

Blumenthal: I know they ultimately did adopt a policy which was at the time not dissimilar from UC's. But that was years later. I don't believe, however, that they've adopted the new, more liberal UC policy from ten years ago. But in fairness, the school has adopted some benefits that are more liberal than UC's.

Just for your information, in 2006 UC adopted a new policy, which was more generous than the old one. The old one gave every woman faculty member the opportunity to have a one-term active service modified duties after giving birth to a child. In 2006, the policy was changed to two terms. And it was also changed to make it presumptive. So that there was a presumption that a woman would take two terms of active service modification. The burden was on her to not take it, if you know what I mean.

Reti: Yes. So you don't have to go begging for your leave.

Blumenthal: You don't have to go begging for it. I remember this vividly, not just because of our experience, but because I was then the chair of the senate. I was very supportive of these changes, except that I wanted them to not make it two terms, but rather an academic year. I argued that it didn't make sense to make it two semesters at the semester campuses and two quarters at the quarter campuses.

Reti: I was wondering about that when you said "term." I thought well, that's only ten weeks here and at Berkeley it would be sixteen weeks.

Blumenthal: So I argued strongly for it. I personally went to the president and had a meeting with the president on this issue because I wanted him to change it. I pleaded with him to do that. It was really important to me. And he wouldn't do it. The reason he gave was that it was vetted with the EVCs and they were strongly opposed to it.

So that's where the policy stood until this year. This year [2018] the policy was changed again to make it not two terms, but rather an academic year—three quarters or two semesters.

Reti: Good.

Blumenthal: The chair of the academic senate told me that recently, because he knew that I had spilled blood over that issue. So I was very grateful that they had made that change.

Reti: Oh, that's great to know. Wow, George, that's quite a story.

Blumenthal: Yeah, it is quite a story. (laughs) I never knew I lived such an interesting life.

Reti: Well, that's a real battle.

Blumenthal: But it was a battle of principle.

Reti: I understand. It wasn't just about your personal life.

Blumenthal: When our kids were born, we lived in Santa Cruz. We had real issues with childcare because we first tried the university childcare. I might say usually you want to get on a list for the childcare as soon as the rabbit dies, but today, most people don't even know what that means.

Reti: Oh. This has to do with pregnancy tests?

Blumenthal: Pregnancy tests -yes.

Reti: It took me a little bit to put that together.

Blumenthal: That's a very old-fashioned way of saying it.

Reti: That's an old saying.

Blumenthal: There were openings at the university childcare, but they were very inflexible in terms of the hours and how you did it. That just didn't work for us. Then there

was the issue of some childcare places want your kids to be toilet-trained. That was an issue for Aaron, as it is for many boys, I might add.

So finally we ended up finding a place for him at a preschool in Capitola called Kinder Cottage, which was great. They were fantastic. Always grateful to them. We put him in a few days a week in Kinder Cottage, and used the au pair the other days of the week because we wanted him to have the experience of being with other kids his age. That worked well for us.

Then Sarah came along. Aaron got to the point where he was starting school. That was something of a crisis. Kelly and I had talked on and off over the years about maybe moving to a place that would be more equitably located between Santa Cruz and San Francisco.

Reti: She was commuting to Hastings.

Blumenthal: She was commuting to Hastings. She taught two days a week, so it wasn't as bad as it sounds. But still, sometimes she had three days a week. She would often stay overnight there. She often took Aaron with her to stay overnight there in the hotel that she stayed in, but it wasn't ideal. And I remember when she was pregnant with—oh, I don't remember which pregnancy it was—but she has this great story about how she was driving up Highway 1 to go teach and she got pulled over for speeding. She told the officer that she was pregnant, which was obvious, and she had to pee really badly. So not only did he not give her a ticket, he put on his siren and he led her to the nearest restroom.

Reti: (laughter) That's great.

Blumenthal: I said that was gender discrimination. So anyway, we had talked on and off about doing it, but we never really had moved very far along that direction. But as Aaron approached school age, the idea became more serious. We did start him at

Westlake School, which seemed just fine. I had no problems with Westlake. But we were worried about what was going to happen further down the line. We had some concerns about what we had heard at the time about the school system in Santa Cruz. I hasten to add that I think the school system today in Santa Cruz is much better than it was twenty-five years ago when Aaron was starting school. But at the time we were concerned.

So we talked to Sandy Faber. Sandy had moved to Los Gatos, or actually to Monte Sereno, when her daughter was going to start high school. She didn't want her daughter to go to Santa Cruz High. For her, the schools were the primary motivation. Sandy's husband works in San Jose. He's a lawyer at a big firm in San Jose. They had gone through this same process some years earlier, so we had a long talk with them. They were very encouraging about moving to Los Gatos or Monte Sereno.

Then I talked to Doug Lin. Doug was in a similar situation and he decided to move to Palo Alto. Doug commuted in from Palo Alto. Again, it was the school situation that drove him to do that. I was aware that there were people on campus—Jim Gill, Michael Tanner—who sent their kids to an elite private high school in Monterey. They sent their kids there rather than to the local schools. This was before we had the local charter school [Pacific Collegiate]. So you know, we were worried about it. Eventually, we became somewhat more concerned when we started hearing about some of the philosophy at Westlake. So we decided to move. Sandy encouraged us to move to Los Gatos, and Doug encouraged us to move to Palo Alto, so we looked at both. We were shocked at the cost. Basically, at that time, the same house in Los Gatos was twice what it was in Santa Cruz.

We looked and looked. We looked at a lot of places. We also noticed that the price of a house depended critically on the school district. Our realtor said, "I'll take you and show you whatever you want, but I want you to see what happens if we go just across the street

to a different school district.” The price was much lower for an equivalent house. But we were moving for the kids.

Reti: That was the whole point.

Blumenthal: That was the whole point, well, and also to some extent to have a more equitable commute. Kelly hated Highway 17. Always has. I’ve never minded it. Honestly, doesn’t bother me at all. So it made sense for us to move.

So finally we found a place and we decided to move. I remember we went and visited Daves Avenue School, the elementary school, which we liked a lot. We talked to the principal. We wanted to convince her that we would be great parents to have our kids in the school. It was probably good that we did it because at the time we visited the school, there were three openings in the kindergarten. After we bought our house, the principal called us and said, “Two of those openings have been taken and now there’s only one more opening.” We said, “Well we’re moving in three weeks.”

Reti: But it’s a public school!

Blumenthal: Yeah, but then they would send him to a more distant school.

Reti: Oh. I didn’t realize it worked that way.

Blumenthal: Los Gatos School District has several elementary schools. So I said, “What do we do?”

She said, “Enroll him now.”

I said, “We haven’t moved yet.”

She said, “Don’t worry about it. Just enroll him now.” So we did. So we spent about three weeks, maybe a month, where I commuted over the hill every day to take Aaron to school, then came back to Santa Cruz. It turned out to be a great experience for both of our kids to be in the Los Gatos schools. I have to say this with great pride: they both ended up being the valedictorians of Los Gatos High School. They thrived in the school system.

And I’ll tell you one more quick story, which I think says something about our school systems. The year that we went to Israel, Sarah had just finished first grade. So she was going into second grade. We were going to go away for a year and we wanted to know for sure that when we got back, Sarah would be able to return to Daves Avenue Elementary School, be with her friends, etcetera. They wouldn’t guarantee you that. They wouldn’t tell us that that was possible. We said, “We’ve lived there. She’s been a student here. We just want to go away for a year. Don’t worry. She’ll be educated. She won’t be behind.” They said no, no, no, they can’t guarantee it.

As I said, my wife is not a shrinking violet. She called, talked to the superintendent of schools. He wouldn’t go any further. So finally, she even talked to the lawyer for the state board of education in Sacramento and he made some kind of a commitment. But it wasn’t yet transmitted back down to Los Gatos when, at the time, I don’t remember the name of it, but they gave all kids in schools these tests, the star test, I think they were called. When they gave Sarah the star test, she scored 99.9 percentile on the test. Suddenly, there was no problem with making sure that there was a space for her when she got back because of course, they want their average star test to be as high as possible.

So, we got that arranged before we went off to Israel. And, of course, everything was fine when she got back. Aaron was, by that time, starting middle school.

So, we moved to Los Gatos. I was dumbfounded by the change in culture in moving from Santa Cruz to Los Gatos. In Santa Cruz, we lived on Escalona Drive. We had interesting people around us. We had a retired couple across the street that I loved talking with. They were salt of the earth kind of people. We had a couple directly across the street from us: she was a pediatrician and he was a humor consultant.

Reti: A humor consultant? (laughs)

Blumenthal: He was actually a lawyer who gave up the law to become a humor consultant. He would work with companies on how to inject humor into their presentations. Interesting people.

And we moved to Los Gatos. We moved to a fairly rich neighborhood in Monte Sereno. We bought a house that we really couldn't afford. It was above our ability to pay, but we figured that was probably a wise investment to make. We really struggled the first couple of years there. We were really short on money.

But we moved there and the culture was completely different. One way to say it is, for all the years I lived in Santa Cruz, if you had asked me to tell you the location of the nearest place that does women's nails, I couldn't have told you. I mean, I'm sure they were here, but I didn't know where they were. I'd never noticed one. In Los Gatos, it felt like they were almost on every street. I think that that said something about the culture.

I found the people on the street to be kind of unfriendly. We certainly at first didn't build many relationships, except for the people directly across the street from us. (laughs) We moved in and they came over to us and welcomed us to the neighborhood and said how pleased they were to have us here because it would be so nice to have another Democrat on the street. (laughter)

Reti: Uh-oh.

Blumenthal: So, it was really a very, very different culture. It was a bedroom community for executives. We weren't executives, but for us, it was a bedroom community as well, because we were going in opposite directions to work. Kelly would drive up to San Francisco usually at five in the morning to avoid the traffic. And I would come to Santa Cruz, anti-commuting, which I've done ever since. For me, that wasn't bad.

Sarah had been enrolled at Kinder Cottage for three days a week. We didn't want to take her out of there. It was a good environment for her. We looked at preschools in Los Gatos and we weren't happy. I mean, some of them gave entrance exams to be in preschool.

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: We talked to others about what their programming was, what it was like to be there and we were really uncomfortable with just the general feeling. So, we decided to leave her in preschool in Capitola. Three days a week, Sarah commuted in with me. It was nice. I enjoyed it. It was an opportunity to be with her a little bit more than I might otherwise have been. We left her there until she started kindergarten.

The only other thing I want to say is both Kelly and I were heavily, heavily involved in our kids' education and development as, I think, all parents are. But we did things really strongly. We read to our kids more than you can imagine. I remember reading kids' books until they were five, six, maybe even seven. I remember reading Aaron the entire Sherlock Holmes mystery series. I remember reading both kids the James Herriot series of books. And it got to the point (laughs) that frequently, I hate to admit this, sometimes I would go into the kids' room and read to them. I'd fall asleep and they'd be awake—(laughter)

Reti: That's so cute.

Blumenthal: That wasn't uncommon in those days. But we were very, very involved. We were also really cognizant of their education, in the sense that when we went to Israel on sabbatical—I haven't talked about Israel yet—but when we went to Israel, we decided to enroll our children in public school. Our theory was—it sounded like a good theory—that we wanted our kids to feel that they could acclimate to a new environment, that they could learn a new language, that they could thrive in something very different than what they were used to at home. A lot of people talked about the great experiences their kids had in Israel. So, we really wanted to do that.

Sabbatical in Israel

It was an experiment that didn't turn out quite as we had hoped. We had given them Hebrew lessons before we left, so they both could speak Hebrew to some extent, and during the course of the year, they became fairly fluent in Hebrew. So, they became fairly good at it at some point during the year, but not from day one.

It was certainly an experience for them to get used to Israeli schools. At a typical elementary school in the U.S., the teacher is at the front of the room and she's conducting class through most of the day. There might be some breakout activities, but usually the teacher is in the front of the class. Not in Israel. In Israel, it's all breakout activity and it's very noisy. Everyone's always talking at once. It isn't organized like in the U.S. classroom. It's very, very different. And yet the kids seem to do very well.

I didn't speak any Hebrew when we arrived. Kelly had taken a rush course and she's very good at languages, so she could speak some elementary Hebrew. Actually, when we arrived, the first challenge was to register them for school. I had no idea how hard that was. I have no idea how lucky we were.

So, before we got to Israel, we had to find a place to live. I mean, job one, right? Of course, with two kids, we wanted to make sure it was a good place. Kelly was going to be at the Mount Scopus campus in East Jerusalem. I was going to be at the Givat Ram campus in West Jerusalem. We both agreed that it was appropriate for us to live near Kelly's campus, in that general area of French Hill.

We had a friend who lived in the area. She agreed to look at apartments. Somehow, we got a list of apartments and she checked them out for us and identified a couple that seemed reasonable. I don't even know if we looked at pictures, to be honest with you. But we basically decided to accept our friend's recommendations. We did some negotiation. Landlords there were not easy to deal with, not easy to deal with at all. But we finally rented an apartment from a Canadian woman, so we had a place to go.

And somehow, we got in touch with her, or they got in touch with us, a couple—he was then a faculty member at San Diego, Dick Friedman, quite well known. He wrote the very famous book, *Who Wrote the Bible?* A well-worth reading book, if you've never read it. His wife was a student. She was just finishing her PhD. Anyway, they were going there. They had a couple of kids. And they contacted us to see what we knew about the housing situation. So, we gave them our list of reject apartments. They ended up renting one of our rejects, which was just a few blocks away from where we were renting. They got there first.

They were very nice. When we arrived at our apartment, there was some kind of basket of fruit or something waiting for us, which it turns out was really helpful, because we had no food and buying food at night there is not so easy. So, it was very nice that they'd given us that basket. They didn't even realize how nice it was.

So, I called them and we talked and we met. Turned out the next day he was going downtown in Jerusalem to register his kids for school. He invited me to come along.

Reti: And he spoke Hebrew.

Blumenthal: He's a Biblical scholar. He spoke Biblical Hebrew, but that was good enough. It was close enough. So, we went down together and did it. Oh, my God, I could not have done that without him. I couldn't have come close to doing it without him. It was totally beyond my capability. I was so grateful to him for that. We got our kids registered for school and we sent them to the local public school, which was great, in principle.

Over the course of the year we would get report cards from the school which we couldn't read. (Reti laughs) We had somebody who babysat for us and she translated the report cards. She told us our kids were geniuses. But Kelly and I made a decision that we would home educate our kids to make sure that on key issues of reading, writing, and arithmetic that they would be up to par. So, I took on math and Kelly took on reading and writing.

During the course of that year, we took a number of vacations. We took a vacation in Italy, which was a bus tour. We took a bus tour of Greece. Then we took a bus tour of Turkey. We also did a bus tour of Jordan. We were going to do a tour of Egypt, but two days before we were going to leave was the day of the Luxor massacre, where some terrorists massacred literally a hundred Norwegian tourists at Luxor. We were way too scared to go to Egypt at that point.

But on the tours, we would sit on the buses. We'd tutor the kids. The other people on the bus thought it was hilarious that we were doing this.

I remember one time I was teaching Aaron about the Pythagorean Theorem. Oh, let me get this right. Let me think for a second. I can't remember the whole story now. I'd have

to make it up again. But it was a story about Indians and the punchline was that the sons of the squaws on the sides is equal to the squaw on the hippopotamus. I remember telling him this story. When I was done, to my utter astonishment, the whole bus started roaring with laughter. I didn't realize how loud I was. (laughter) So we really did make sure that they were academically prepared when they got back. And they were. It wasn't a problem. In fact, Aaron went into an advanced math class. Sarah did very, very well. We didn't want them to be behind.

Israel was kind of funny. I never planned to go to Israel. My grandparents bought Israeli bonds for me when I was a baby, which Jewish parents and grandparents did. But by the time I was an adult, certainly after the '67 war, I was somewhat cooler about Israel. I was certainly a strong advocate of Israel during the '67 war, which was a war of survival. But I was really disappointed with Israel after the war. I have always felt that when you have a battle and you have a victory, that's the moment when you have to show some sympathy, some compassion for your foe, and that's an opportunity for you to establish the new normal, the new ground rules, and to do it with compassion, with caring. But Israel didn't do that. Israel celebrated their great victory and started taking a very hard line on the West Bank and certainly about Gaza and the Golan Heights, something I really didn't approve of. This was a matter of principle. I thought this was the opportunity to secure their future.

So, I really didn't have a desire to go to Israel, particularly after troubles started there. My inclination was to stay as far away as possible, except I became friends with Avishai Dekel, who was Israeli. I met Avishai at a conference, I think in Santa Barbara. And his wife, Tzippi. I really liked them. He worked in a field similar to mine. Joel and I invited him to come to Santa Cruz, so he started coming to Santa Cruz. He's been coming to Santa Cruz

every summer for thirty years now. It's been a long-term friendship and long-term relationship.

Avishai invited us to come to Israel. When he invited us to a two-week conference that they had in Israel, Kelly and I graciously accepted and went. By that time, Aaron was a baby. He was nine months old, roughly. We took him with us.

It was an experience to remember, even getting there. God, I still remember this. I shouldn't tell this story, but I will. So, we were on a flight from San Francisco to New York, at which point we were supposed to get another flight to Israel. Probably TWA. I think TWA was still going in those days.

Reti: About when are we talking about now?

Blumenthal: This had to be 1986. Oh, and I remember we really weren't sure we could go, because Kelly's mother had been very sick and we thought we might cancel out. But Kelly's mother died a month or so before the trip. So, we decided to do it.

So, we got on this plane in San Francisco. And there were a lot of Israelis going back to Israel. I really don't know why there were so many Israelis on this plane, because it was a flight to New York, and then you change planes to Israel. But anyway, this was a flight that developed a mechanical problem. So, we had to land in the Midwest somewhere, Kansas or something. We landed in Kansas and we had to wait there for a few hours. We had the baby, of course, with us. Israelis are not the most patient people on the face of the earth and they were really anxious to get going. Finally, the airline brought in another plane and flew us to New York.

Well, by the time we got to New York, our connection had already departed. The airline said they would put us up in a hotel. The Israelis were furious. They wanted to go immediately. We wanted to go to the hotel and just get some sleep.

So, they bus us all to this hotel. I don't know why they were mostly Israelis in this group, but they were. Maybe there weren't so many Israelis at first, but when we got to New York, I don't know how it happened, but there were a lot of Israelis.

So, we get to the hotel, and there was a long line at the desk. It's one of these hotels that serves the airlines. And we're registering. Everyone's registering. We're near the back of this long line. And, of course, the Israelis, they get up to the desk and what do they do? They start arguing with the clerk because they're angry because they can't get their flight that's in New York, right? So, what does the clerk do? She slows down. So, this was taking forever. It was a nightmare.

Finally, I couldn't stand it anymore. So finally—and Aaron never lets me forget this—I pinched him really, really hard, so hard he started crying.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no!

Blumenthal: He started wailing. So, somebody in the line said, "Let the people with the baby go first." They let us go to the front of the line and we got our room and we were able to go to bed. I later told Aaron the story and he never lets me forget it.

Reti: I'm sure he doesn't remember it, but you told him about it.

Blumenthal: Of course, he doesn't remember. So, we get to Israel and we go to this conference. It was a nice conference; it was a good conference. While we were there, I rented a car and we did a little bit of sightseeing. One of the things we did in the sightseeing took us past East Jerusalem. As we were driving past the old city in East

Jerusalem, we got stoned. And when they say someone in the Mideast is stoned, it doesn't mean they're throwing little pebbles. It means they're throwing big rocks. They threw a big rock at our car, which hit the rear window and shattered it. But because it's a car window, it didn't break, it just cracked all over. It was really scary because our child was in the car seat. Then I had to spend a day at the police station reporting all of this. At the end of the day, it was okay, but it was a scary experience.

Ironically, a few days later at the conference that was in Israel, Avishai had rented a bus to give us a tour of Jerusalem. When we were on the Mount of Olives, which is in East Jerusalem, somebody threw a rock at the bus and broke the window next to which I was sitting. (laughs)

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I felt like I had attracted some attention. So, I certainly became acclimated to the intifada that was going on in Israel. Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, it was a good visit. (Reti laughs)

We agreed to go back a year or two later when we had both kids. Sarah must have been very young. I was invited to go back for two months. There was an Institute for Advanced Studies in Israel at the Hebrew University. They usually hosted a couple of major conferences that lasted like months in time. So, there were two conferences going on during that two-month period. One was on the large-scale structure of the universe. The other was on the Dead Sea Scrolls. At the conference that I was attending, we wrote some papers. We did some interesting work. I was really glad that I'd come. They gave me an office and everything and they gave me a fancy professorship [Lady Davis Visiting Professor]. It was a named chair for those two months. It provided some support.

The university gave us an apartment and we brought our au pair, who was Norwegian, and the two kids. So, we did some sightseeing during that time as well. But one of the things I remember was one day they came in and they said they had arranged a tour of the caves at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Most of the caves were not open to the public but because these Dead Sea Scrolls scholars were there—and they were all eighty years old, by the way—they were going to take us to the caves of Qumran. And this was in June or July.

Reti: Oh, no.

Blumenthal: So, they invited all of us at the other conference to join them, if we wanted. A few of us did. I asked Kelly and she said sure. So, we left the kids with the au pair. At least I was smart enough to get some water. We had lots of water with us. We drove out to Qumran, which is next to the Dead Sea. There's this huge hillside that goes on forever and the caves are in the hillside.

So, we went up to the first cave and we went into the first cave. And oh, my God, these eighty-year-old scholars were so excited, because scroll number three and scroll number eighteen were discovered right in that corner of that cave. They're looking. It was just a cave, you know. That was fine.

And then they said, "Now we're going to go to this other cave." So, we climbed up. We had to use a rope to climb up to the next cave. We get to the cave and it's another cave. That's where scroll six and scroll nine were found. (laughter) All of the scholars were just going out of their mind with happiness. But by this time, it's pretty hot. It's a summer day. It's in the desert.

Reti: Yeah, it was probably well over 100 degrees, I guess.

Blumenthal: That's right. We had been a caravan of cars driving there with an armed guard, of course because Westerners were required at that time to have an armed guard with an Uzi to protect them. At that that point Kelly said she was tired, she didn't want to do this anymore. Seen one cave, seen them all. She was going to go back and wait at the car. Then she realized that the Uzi was with us. (laughs) So she realized she had no choice.

Reti: She was trapped.

Blumenthal: We were in for the whole shebang. So, we visited every goddamned cave on that mountaintop. We were exhausted! The eighty-year-olds were so excited. They didn't seem tired; they didn't seem exhausted. They were just so thrilled to be able to see these caves. It was a rich experience. (laughs)

Reti: Wow. That's quite an image.

Blumenthal: We also did other things. I think we drove down to Eilat and Masada. We swam in the Dead Sea. We did all the standard touristy things. It was a nice visit. We did enjoy it very much. It was an interesting introduction to the culture.

I think one of the most interesting things was, at the end of the visit, as we were going back, I remember we asked our au pair, we said, "Look, now that you've been in Israel, you've seen a lot of things that are very culturally different from what you're used to either in the U.S. or in Norway. What surprised you the most about your visit to Israel?"

She answered without waiting a blink. She said, "It was the Shabbat elevators." The big hotels have special elevators that stop at every floor on Shabbat.

Reti: Oh, because you aren't allowed to push a button and do work on Shabbat, right.

Blumenthal: So, you don't have to press a button. That was the thing that she thought was the most interesting or surprising aspect of Israel.

Reti: So then, next time we'll pick up with when you actually went to Israel for your sabbatical.

Blumenthal: We'll pick up in Israel.

Reti: So, today is December 4th, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I'm here for my twelfth oral history session with Chancellor George Blumenthal for the oral history that we're doing together. Today we're going to continue with talking about Israel.

Blumenthal: Okay. So, one of the other really notable things about that two-month visit was we decided since we were there for two months, we would put Aaron in preschool. We actually found a preschool that would take him. So, we put him in the preschool. (laughs) It was a problem from day one. He was like four years old. The preschool teachers complained that he wasn't aggressive enough.

Reti: (laughs) California kid, huh?

Blumenthal: A California kid in an Israeli preschool. You can just picture it. We weren't anxious to change his level of aggression, shall we just say. Somehow, we got through it.

Then we decided to take a sabbatical there. It was a difficult decision because, first of all, we had to arrange to do things together. We had done that with Harvard, and it had worked. Harvard and BU. In her heart, Kelly really, really wanted to go to France, to Paris. And I really, really didn't want to go to Paris. There were people I knew in Paris, but I wasn't close to them and I didn't think I'd particularly thrive academically in Paris. So, we went back and forth, and back and forth. Finally, we did decide to go to Israel. I had a close collaborator in Israel. Kelly and I were close friends with him and his wife: Avishai

Dekel and his wife, Zippy. So that was one factor. Kelly also had a really good friend at the law school there. So, we had some kind of a support network.

It was soon clear that I wanted to visit the Givat Ram campus of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I'm a theorist. That's where they do theory. Tel Aviv is much more of an observational institution, although I had friends there as well. My friend Avishai actually lived in Tel Aviv and commuted daily to Jerusalem. We made a decision to live in Jerusalem.

Kelly made a deal that she would teach a law school course at the law school, which is on the Mount Scopus campus. The Givat Ram campus of Hebrew University is in West Jerusalem and has been active there since the beginning. The Mount Scopus campus pre-existed the independence of Israel, but it was located in East Jerusalem. After the '48 war, it was not accessible to the west, from West Jerusalem. It was still kind of occupied by Israelis. If you go to the Mount Scopus campus, it looks like a fort. It really looks like a fort. It's got underground tunnels. It's got these huge walls around it. I'm not sure I know all the history there, but I mean, I guess if I were going to be in there as an Israeli after '48, I'd want strong walls around me. I don't think it really operated. I think they just continued to occupy it. And then of course, after the '67 war, the Israelis came back and revitalized it, and basically made the Givat Ram campus where I was, the science and engineering campus, and made the Mount Scopus campus the social science, law, humanities campus. So, we were at different campuses.

We decided to live on French Hill. It led to an interesting situation. One of the first things we had to decide to do was what were we going to do about transportation? We kind of knew we needed a car. And so (laughs) so we got to Israel. The first thing we did is we

fought about what kind of a car to get. Kelly's view was we had to get a Volvo, it was so dangerous to drive in Israel.

Reti: Safe, yeah. Tank.

Blumenthal: My attitude was it cost about twice as much to buy a car in Israel as it does in the U.S., so even a used Volvo was going to be really, really expensive. Well, she won. (Reti laughs) Her logic was impeccable.

So, we got the car. Of course, then you have to get insurance. So, the first thing they ask you is do you drive on Saturdays? Of course, I said yes. Then I started hearing warnings. "You've got to be real careful in Jerusalem when you drive on Saturdays because if you drive into the wrong neighborhood, they'll stone your car. The ultraorthodox will stone your car."

So, I got insurance. I remember I was very careful to get insurance so we could both drive the car, although ironically, in the year that we were in Israel, my wife drove our car once. That's when I kind of pushed her into doing it as we were going out to dinner, to drive us to dinner. She really, really didn't want to drive in Israel.

The guy I bought the car from was a really nice guy. He was an obstetrician from Russia and he had been living there a few years. He went with me to register the car. It was really, again, fascinating Israeli dynamics. At their equivalent of the DMV, they had long, long, long lines, and long, long, long waits. But he didn't worry about that. He just walked in with the paperwork and he looked around at all the clerks until he found one whose baby he'd delivered. (laughter) So we were in and out of there really fast. (laughter)

One way to characterize the driving in Israel is to tell you a few stories. First, he told me when I bought the car, that it was a great car. It had antilock brakes and those antilock

brakes had saved him several times. When he said that, I remember kind of smirking because my car in the U.S. had antilock brakes and they'd never kicked in. Maybe I'm a little old lady from Pasadena. (Reti laughs) But before that year was out, those brakes saved me several times. That's one way of putting it.

A second way of putting it is taking our kids to school, the school was across a main street. We had to go to the main street, cross it, and then it was about another block beyond. Of course, in Israel, cars don't stop. In a year of taking our kids to school, only once, I wasn't there—it was just Kelly who took them that day—only once did cars stop to let them cross. And the car was rear-ended.

And the third was that in my son's class in school, or maybe it was my daughter's, I can't remember which now, one of the students was killed in an auto accident. The death rate in Israel for the last forty years, every year is much higher in car accidents than it is in terrorism. So, if you say you don't want to go to Israel because of terrorism, you really should say you don't want to go to Israel because of the traffic dangers. That is simply a hard and fast statistic.

I remember driving through town one day. I'm driving down the street; It's a two-lane road, one in each direction. Two cars come up behind me and one passes me on the left and one passes me by going up on the sidewalk. I wasn't driving that slow. There's a level of aggressiveness there that's extreme. Driving was an interesting challenge. It was also a challenge because, I don't know if you've ever, have you ever been to Jerusalem?

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Okay, well the streets of Jerusalem are laid out as though somebody took a plate of spaghetti, plopped it down on the ground. That makes it confusing. This was before GPS.

Reti: There's no grid there at all.

Blumenthal: There's no grid. It's all spaghetti roads and they change their names every three or four blocks. So, you get on Bar Kokhba Road and you're fine, you're on Bar Kokhba Road. And then three blocks later, it's something completely different. And, just to make things even more difficult, the street signs are in Hebrew, English, and Arabic. But they do their street signs in a way that—oh, it's hard to describe this in words. In the U.S., when they do street signs at a corner where they have two street signs, they're always on top of each other. So, one is above the other. So, you can read both. In Israel, they're at the same height level, so you can only read one of the two street signs at a time. It makes it all the more complicated to find your way around, especially in the pre-GPS period. So, it was a struggle.

And parking in Jerusalem was just a bear. I would drive to campus every day. Kelly would either walk—it was a long walk, but it was walkable—or she would take the bus to Mount Scopus. That worked for us. But it got complicated because our kids had both been taking violin lessons and we wanted them to continue their violin lessons. Kelly found this really elite music school called the Rosenberg Academy in downtown Jerusalem, with a really pristine, great reputation. She found a teacher who would take on each of the kids. So, this was great. They were going to do this a couple of days a week after school. Kelly and I made a deal that she would bring the kids to the music lesson. She didn't like to take the bus because of fear of terrorism. So, she would take a taxi to the music school, drop off the kids, go home. Then I would pick them up on the way back from campus. It was a system that worked.

But the first day, I was really nervous because this was right in the middle of downtown Jerusalem. Again, all the spaghetti streets. Plus, they were all one-way. I had to find this

place, which was job one. Then I had to find a place to park within a mile of this place. The kids would have complained bitterly if I made them walk too far. So, I'm driving—I had my white Volvo and I'm driving there. I find the street. I'm even pointed in the right direction. I'm so pleased. I'm looking at the address. I realize that Rosenberg Academy is the next building over. As I turn onto the street, there's about five or six parking places right there, unoccupied, in front of this very modern-looking stone building. Really modern-looking, very clean-looking building right up the street. I said wow, I really lucked out. So, I parked my car. Literally, the minute I parked my car and I turned off the ignition, immediately about ten soldiers with Uzis appeared.

Reti: No! (laughter)

Blumenthal: They're jabbering at me in fast Hebrew.

Reti: Oh, God.

Blumenthal: I'm completely dumbfounded. They're all pointing their guns at me— (laughter) So I roll down the window and I say in very halting Hebrew, "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying."

He said in perfect English, "Oh, you speak English." I said yes. He said, "You can't park here."

I said, "What do you mean, I can't park here?"

He says, "This is the prime minister's residence."

I said, "This is the prime minister's residence?"

He said, “Yes, it took us so long to get here because you were in a white Volvo so we assumed you were a foreign diplomat.” Of course, it took two milliseconds for them to get there. (laughter)

I said, “Oh, so I can’t park here.” He said no. I said, “But I’m just going next door to the Rosenberg.” It was right next door. It was literally right next door. Ten steps away.

He said, “No, you can’t park here.”

So, I said fine. So, I went off and did my search for parking. Throughout the year, there were never any cars parked in front of the prime minister’s residence. The prime minister then was Netanyahu 1.0. He had replaced Rabin, who had been assassinated. So, there was a lot of sensitivity about assassination. I even remember one day I’m taking the kids out and we see the limousines leaving the prime minister’s residence. I realized they were two identical limousines who went different ways. They were doing the old, which one is the real prime minister trick. If you go to Washington, D.C., the White House has this big lawn around it and then it’s surrounded by a fence, which is guarded. So, if you want to get to the White House unannounced, you have to go through the guarded fence and then all through the lawn, where I’m sure they have a million different security things, even to get to the front door of the White House. But here, right next to the sidewalk was the front door to the prime minister’s residence.

Reti: Wow. No wonder they had guards.

Blumenthal: The whole building was right next to this Rosenberg Academy. They shared a common wall. So, it was just striking to me how different it is than anything I would have imagined.

So, Israel was not an easy place to be, especially if you were a fairly polite, meek-minded American. The concept in Israel of a line, *tor* doesn't exist. In England, it's always impressive. You go to England, people always queue up for everything. In the U.S., they're pretty good, but not always. In Israel, there is no concept of a line. There's a concept of elbows and pushing, but there's no concept of a line. So, for example, I would walk over with the graduate students every day to have lunch at the faculty club we always had lunch at, and Avishai often joined us as well. We wouldn't go to the fancy dining room of the faculty club. They had a little sandwich place. I'd always get a tuna sandwich. But there was always a crowd there. Inevitably, the students would all get their sandwiches and I'd still be fighting through the crowd to get to the front. Usually by the time I got my sandwich and sat down with them, they were usually done with eating their sandwiches. (laughter) I mean, I just couldn't quite cope with the—I'm a big person, but I'm not that pushy.

Reti: Well, you're a Midwesterner.

Blumenthal: And I'm a Midwesterner. Perhaps a more graphic way to say it is that Kelly—(laughs) I remember one of the first days she was at the law school. She came home and I said, "Oh, honey, how was your day?"

She said, "This was a pretty good day. It was only a two-cry day."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "It is so frustrating." She said, "For example, I went to the secretary's desk to get her to help me with the copy maker," to copy something, or something like that. And she said, "As I'm waiting for her, everyone else comes and jumps in front of me. It's like so impolite. Nobody has any consideration for anyone else." She said, "That just happens

over and over and over again throughout the day.” She found that really, really difficult to deal with.

Another place where I saw this—this was almost funny. So, when we entered the country we came in on a visitor’s visa, which allowed us to stay six months or something. But I knew that I had to get this permanentized, or whatever the right word is, for the whole family. So, I went to the university, to their appropriate person. She was very nice. She said, “The rules have changed. Under the old system, you need this set of paperwork.” She gave me all the paperwork and said, “If you can use that, that’s fine. But that’s your backup. But,” she said, “Under the new system, you need this paperwork, including a letter from the president of the university. But if possible, I don’t want you to use the letter from the president of the university, because we don’t want the president of the university to have to write a letter for every goddamned visitor who comes to town.” (Reti laughs) So she said, “I would like to use you as an experiment—”

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs)

Blumenthal: “—to see whether or not you can get through this system without the letter from the president.” I said, “Sure, I’ll do whatever you want. So, she said, “Okay, so here’s what you do. You go to this office that was the state department, or foreign ministry department. They open at eight. You need to be there at 7:30. If you get there at 7:30, you won’t have to wait in line. It will be just fine.”

So, I get there at 7:30 with both sets of paperwork. I’m waiting. There are a lot of people there. We’re kind of waiting in this stairway in front of the door. The door was up some stairs so I’m on the stairway. Then they open the doors. And oh, my God, there was this mad rush of humanity into the building. It was like some giant was shoving all these people in because they’re madly trying to get into position.

So, I get to the top of the stairs. Millions of people had already passed me, but I did get there. I get up there and the first thing I see is a line before several clerks. So, I get in the line. I have to wait about two hours to get to the front of the line. I finally get up to the front of the line and give her my paperwork and explain to her what I need. She says, “You’re in the wrong room. You need to be in that room over there.”

I said, “What about the line there?”

“Well,” she says, “there’s a line there. You can ask them whether they’ll let you in first.” She was nice. She gave me a little note to show them that I had really waited in a long line.

So, I went to the other room. I showed them the note. And she said, “Oh, well, this is fine, but you’ve got to fill out these twenty more forms.” So, she gave me twenty more forms to fill out. So, I went to some table. I filled out the twenty more forms. I brought them back to her.

She said, “You did this all wrong. (laughter) You’ve got to do it all over.” So, I did. I was completely incompetent in terms of getting through their system. But at the end of the day, she never asked me for the letter from the president. (laughs)

Reti: Thank God for that.

Blumenthal: So, I had to go back afterwards to the woman who had given me all the paperwork. I said, “Look, I did the experiment. But you cannot trust the results because I was so incompetent, and they took such pity on me.” (laughter) I was really polite. I didn’t let anything faze me. I tried to be super polite the whole way through. But that’s Israel.

Another way you could describe it is, Israel is a place where your next-door neighbor would be the most friendly person in the world. They’ll invite you to dinner; they’ll watch your kids for you; they’ll do anything that you ask them to do for you. They’ll volunteer.

But if you run into that same person in a government office and they're behind the desk, they will be the nastiest, meanest, most bureaucratic person you could ever imagine. It's an interesting dichotomy. I attributed it to the fact that so many people in Israel are highly educated and really smart, and they're stuck in jobs that are below their abilities. And it frustrates them. My intuition may be completely wrong, but that's how I felt about it.

I was always struck by the divisions while I was there within Israeli society. The first time I ever went to the West Bank, the only thing I could think of was, these people are fighting over *this*? Give it to them! You know? I couldn't believe they were fighting war after war after war over that wasteland. My God, it would seem so silly to me. Of course, I understand it's not that simple.

Anyway, I noticed not just rifts between Arabs and Israelis, but rifts in the society itself among Israelis. So, for example, the Haradim, the ultra-religious—they seemed to live in a completely different world than secular Israelis. Completely different. I tried; I did talk a few times to Haradim. I felt like I was talking to somebody from a different universe. My grandparents were orthodox Jews, so it isn't about being orthodox. It was a certain tribalism, a certain disdain for secularness, a certain holier-than-thou calling that I found really offensive.

I found the societies there weird. An Israeli friend of mine had a sister who had become ultra-orthodox and married somebody in that community. He went to their house one time for dinner and he wanted to bring a cake, but he had to make sure he went to the bakery to get the cake that was blessed by Rabbi X rather than Rabbi Y, because Rabbi Y was worse than the devil in terms of what he might have blessed. I felt very frustrated and depressed about this schism within Israeli society between the ultra-orthodox and secular. And of course, the ultra-orthodox, because they do have many more children,

they are a rising political force within the country. I think it's going to be a long-term problem for that country, which is really sad.

And of course, there's the obvious rift between Arabs and Jews, which so far as I can tell, has only been getting worse over time, not better. When we were there, there was an intifada going on. It wasn't the worst that they've ever had, but it was pretty bad. One time we were supposed to have dinner with another family and there was a bomb that went off in the market downtown. Their daughter got a nail in her nose. I mean, to me, that's just horrifying. Their attitude was okay, she got a nail in her nose. They went to the doctor and took it out and moved on with their lives. In Israel when there's a bombing, even if people die, they come in really quickly. They sweep it up, they clean it up, and the mall is busy again with people as soon as possible. Denial is the real public approach to dealing with the victimization of terrorism.

In the Mahane Market they had bombings while we were there. I went to the Mahane Market a few times, including for lunch sometimes with my colleagues at the university, but I was never comfortable because it was such a crowded place.

There was one shopping mall in Israel and we went to it a number of times. Your car was searched when you went into the shopping mall. The supermarket (laughs) I mean, it was a trip to shop at the supermarket in Israel. The first time we went to the supermarket—I mean, I'm naïve, I thought it would be like in the U.S., right? So, we show up, I park the car, we go in. I get a basket and we go get food. Well, it's really hard to pick out food when the labels are all in Hebrew and you don't speak Hebrew real well. But we managed to get the essentials that we needed. A lot of brands are basically American brands. You can kind of tell from the package what they were. Of course, at the checkout stand, the checkout

people speak Hebrew so fast that I could never understand the questions they asked. It wasn't slow, easy Hebrew. It was really fast.

And so, the first time I finally checked out, paid them—credit cards are great because you don't have to worry about making change. I'm trying to leave and the guard—they have a guard everywhere at every public facility, including supermarkets—the guard wouldn't let me leave. We got into this big argument. (laughs) I couldn't understand a word he said. He didn't even have any teeth. But I knew what he wanted. He didn't want me to leave the supermarket with a cart. I had a full load of groceries. I wasn't going to be able to get it out to my car, which was far out in the parking lot, without the cart. So, I pretended not to understand him.

Finally, an Israeli came by and said, "Let me help you." She translated. She said, "He needs to get a credit card from you that he'll hold on to in order to let you take the cart out so that you will return the cart to the store."

I said, "All right. Fine." But I really didn't want to give him a credit card. So, I gave him my Saratoga library card. (laughter) For a whole year, every time I went to the store, I would give them my Saratoga—(laughter)

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: There were these things like that. I did get my hair cut in an Arab barber shop which was on French Hill. That was fine, although I wondered how many Israelis would allow an Arab to hold a razor to their neck.

But it really came home to me how bad things were when one night, I was invited to a wedding up in the Galilee area of one of the postdocs at the university. He was an Arab. He invited several of us to come to his wedding. So, we decided to make a day of it. I think

we did a two-car caravan. Kelly didn't come. She stayed home with the kids. So, we went up there. We visited the home of a Druze family – this is a sect that does mandatory service in the Israeli army. They kind of live at the border of Syria, so we visited their home to learn a little bit about their sect. They actually are loyal Israelis. They serve in the army.

Anyway, we went there and we went up to the wedding, which was kind of cool to see. Afterwards we went to the house of the guy who got married. There were maybe seven or eight of us. We were all either professors or students. They were so friendly, so welcoming, so nice. It was obvious we were all Jewish. Just very, very nice. Then we hung out at his house until the evening reception. Then we went to the reception. The reception was in this humungous hall somewhere. Lots of food and dancing. I didn't know that when Arabs dance, men and women don't touch. But I learned that. We had a really good time. While we were sitting at our table eating, people after people after people would come by and ask us are we enjoying ourselves. "Oh, why don't you try that other food, you'll really—" They were so warm and welcoming. And I thought, my goodness, here's this case of a few Jews in amongst a bunch of Arabs and they're being so nice, so welcoming, so accepting. I was so impressed.

I got home that night at like three or four in the morning. It was a long drive back to Jerusalem. I was so enthused. I thought, this is so great. If people could just act like this all the time.

I think the next night we were having dinner with our friends in French Hill, an Israeli couple. I was describing to them this experience. Their eyes glazed over. We're talking about a couple who's liberal. Their eyes just glazed over. They weren't the least bit interested. The idea that we were so impressed at being welcomed into an Arab home just

didn't impress them at all, the fact that we had a great time at a reception. They had no interest in this as a phenomenon.

Reti: Oh. That's really sad.

Blumenthal: It so saddened me. It was the woman in that couple who found us the apartment. On French Hill, there was a road leading off of French Hill, downhill somewhere. She told me from the beginning, "This is a road that leads to a little Arab village. My one word of advice to you is don't ever go down that road."

I was running in those days. I'd run five miles a day or something. I'd always come to the entrance of that road. I kept saying, I really want to run down that road. But I was so scared to do it. I remember one day I talked to Kelly about it. She was adamant that I shouldn't run down the road. She said, "You have young kids. You don't want to—"

So, I never went down that road. I've always wondered what it would be like had I run down that road. I kind of regret it that I never did, but I just didn't quite have the courage to do it. But it was so depressing just to see the way the society was going. The incidents of terror. So, I say, it only got worse with time.

It's jumping ahead a little bit, but I went back to Israel a few more times after that year of sabbatical. One time was to a sixtieth birthday celebration of Avishai Dekel's career. I was the master of ceremony for that, and that was very nice. But the other time was right after Mark Yudof became president. Yudof for years used to lead a delegation of university presidents to Israel every year under the auspices of some Jewish organization that paid for the airfare for these presidents to come with their spouses. So right after he became president, he invited Kelly and me to come along. He also invited Michael Drake and his wife Brenda, who was then the chancellor of UC Irvine.¹²⁷ So, they came as well. There were maybe ten, eleven, or twelve presidents. It was a really nice thing. For me, it was

great to be able to rub shoulders with some presidents and their spouses who I would not normally have been able to build relationships with. I also appreciated having some time with our president to kind of lobby him on some issues, although I wasn't particularly successful at the time.

Reti: So, you were chancellor by then.

Blumenthal: I was chancellor, yes. This visit was right after they had built the wall. There's a wall that circles the so-called Green Line in Israel, which was the '48 border. The wall is relatively impenetrable to Arabs, and for universities, particularly Arab universities, it cuts them off from the mainstream of Israel, or the mainstream of academia. It is not a small matter to go from outside the wall to inside the wall, not impossible, but no small matter. It's not something you would do lightly.

So, the whole tenor of the country was very, very different. On that visit, we met with the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, Salam Fayyad. He was a very international guy, regarded by many within the Arab world as being too moderate. But he was officially prime minister of the Palestinian Authority. Anyway, we met with him. We had a good session with him. I felt like he was one of those people that if you could put him and another reasonable person in the room, you could get all of this solved one way or another. But of course, the politics are never that simple.

We also met with people from the Israeli foreign ministry to talk about issues. It was certainly intellectually interesting to go on that presidential visit. One of the most memorable incidents was we went to Sderot, which is the little town right next to the Gaza Strip that always was the recipient of Hamas rockets. If you go to Sderot, they will show you their collection of unexploded bombs, a huge collection of unexploded missiles and bombs. In Sderot, the rule is you're never allowed to be more than ten seconds away from

a bomb shelter. Because they're so close to the border, the missiles get there quickly. When there's a warning, you've got ten seconds to get sheltered. So, they have shelters all over the place. It's quite a grim location. But Israelis are Israelis. They won't give up. So, we went there. We visited. Then we went to the Gaza border and we talked to a bunch of border guards. We sort of inspected the border and learned a little bit about it.

Then they brought us back to a hill just outside of Sderot that overlooks Gaza City. They told us that in the intervening period between when we had left Sderot and returned to Sderot, there had been a rocket attack against the city. A few dozen missiles had landed.

You could kind of see the blood drain out of the faces of the people who were within this group. So, of course, I piped up and I said, "Hey, guys, just think. If Hamas had timed it a little bit better, they could have done a lot for American higher education."

Reti: Oh, no. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Nobody laughed. Not one person laughed.

Reti: Oh, George. Survival humor there.

Blumenthal: But seriously, nobody laughed. Usually somebody laughs at my jokes. Yeah. It was very, very interesting. In the exit interviews, I heard that a lot of presidents and their spouses cited this as being something that really scared them.

Reti: Exit interviews at—

Blumenthal: When we finished our trip.

So anyway, back to the year in Israel. It was certainly an interesting experience, by any measure.

Reti: A lot to wrestle with.

Blumenthal: A lot to wrestle with. Oh, yeah. Well, during the year, it snowed.

Reti: Really? Goodness.

Blumenthal: Snow in Jerusalem is like a once in twenty-five-year phenomenon. It snowed a couple of inches of snow.

Reti: Yeah. It's like snowing in Los Angeles.

Blumenthal: Oh, more so. remember when it snowed in San Diego when I was a student. That was not that unusual. But Jerusalem—much more unusual. The thing is in Jerusalem, they don't have snow plows. They don't do salt and nobody has snow tires or chains. The drivers were going nuts. You can imagine the drivers in Jerusalem when there's snow and ice on the road. It was horrible. (laughter) So they closed the schools for three days because there was like two inches of snow on the ground. They just couldn't let the kids go to school under those circumstances.

So, our kids decided to go out in front of our apartment and they built a snowman. (Reti laughs) So they built a little snowman. They put a little kipa on its head.

Reti: That's so cute.

Blumenthal: I swear to you, in the next day, there was a steady stream of cars coming to our apartment and taking pictures of our snowman because none of them had ever seen such a thing before. It was amazing. The kids did it just for fun.

Reti: Not part of the culture at all.

Blumenthal: Not part of the culture at all, so they were just amazed by the snowman.

And speaking of kids in school, there were a lot of days when there was no school. I mean, I'm Jewish, so I kind of know the major Jewish holidays. But they had holidays there that I never heard of. Many holidays I never heard of. It was amazing how many holidays they had! But they celebrated all of them and closed the schools. So, schools were closed a lot. One day, this was really funny—we walked our kids to school and there's nobody there. There was a guard there; there was always a guard. We didn't speak Hebrew well enough to be able to communicate with him. We tried to talk with him but he kept looking at his watch and then pointing at the sky. I just couldn't figure out what he was trying to convey. We're having this weird conversation with him, because we just didn't know what the hell was going on. Then another American family drove up—there weren't that many American families in the school, but there were some—to drop off their kids. They were equally puzzled. Finally, we figured it out. It was daylight savings time. They had changed the clocks. So, we had to wait an hour.

Reti: Oh, so it wasn't they were closed. They were just open later.

Blumenthal: Well, it turned out, unbeknownst to me, daylight savings time in Israel is a major political issue every year. They fight it out every year. It's partly because of the ultra-religious, who have to do certain things at dawn and dusk. So, to them it is crucially important when dawn and dusk start. Every year they have a fight and they come to a different conclusion. We had completely missed that. Had no idea.

We also took many trips while we were there. I was reluctant to take all these trips, but Kelly decided we had to do it and she was right. So, we took trips, like during Yom Kippur and during Passover. When the schools were closed for long periods of time, we just left the country. People said we should have experienced these holidays in Israel. I'm glad we didn't. It would have been very frustrating. Everything's closed. Well, Saturdays in

Jerusalem were grim because nothing is open. Finally, I figured out that the movie theater was open, so I would take the kids to the movies as often as I could on Saturday. But even that was kind of weird. I remember the first time I took them to the movie theater, I was standing in line. We get up to get our tickets. We give our tickets to the guard. And he starts asking me some question in Hebrew that I didn't understand. It took a few iterations before I finally—he was asking me if I was packing a gun. (laughter)

We went to Jordan and got to see Petra. I think it's officially one of the great wonders of the world. I think it's deservedly so. And it was fun. The only thing was that we got there, and you have to walk down this valley to get into the main part of it. But they have ponies that you can ride. The kids wanted to ride a pony, so we put them on a pony. I thought that meant that I was going to lead them on a pony. But that's not the way it works. You can't walk down the pony trail.

Reti: Oh, no. So, you just sent them off on their ponies.

Blumenthal: Just as the kids are about to leave, Kelly says to me, "You've got to get on a pony." (Reti laughs) So some poor pony had to carry me down that trail because she wasn't going to let the kids out of my sight. She wasn't going to ride a pony. (laughter) So I rode this poor little pony down. But it's well worth seeing.

It was strange being in Jordan. They have weird rules. At the time we were there—I don't know if it's still true—one of the things I noticed is we didn't see any motorcycles. So, I remember asking the guide and he said in Jordan there's a law that only the king can drive a motorcycle. So, if you see a motorcycle, it is the king.

We saw a bunch of Roman ruins. We saw Amman. But Petra was by far away the high point. I always remember going back into Israel at one of the border crossings. So, we show up at the border crossing on this bus. They start asking us every question under the

sun. Very suspicious of us. Of course, we're really a suspicious family, right? We had all our paperwork. Everything was in order. They were really giving us a hard time until a bus load of Arabs showed up, at which point they had absolutely no interest in us because if they gave us a hard time, they were going to give them an even harder time.

And speaking of the border, I should mention this example as well. I don't know if it was your experience when you went to Israel, but before you get on a flight to Israel, they interview you, do a psychological screening. You don't have to do that when you enter the country. But when you leave the country, you have to do a screening.

During my visits to Israel, each time I visited for a short visit, Avishai, my friend, would come to pick me up at the airport. When I left, he would take me to the airport, which was important, because he would stay with me as I went through the initial stages. So, he would be with me when I was screened by the people, and he would kind of tell them not to worry about me. They'd believe him, because he was Israeli—so obviously Israeli.

So, while we were there, we were visited by a woman who used to clean our house for us and who became a really good friend of ours. She was an immigrant from Ethiopia. While we were there, she decided to go back to Ethiopia to visit her family. Then afterwards she came to visit us and she stayed with us for a week and we showed her around. It was really cool.

So, when she left, by then I'd been there most of the year, I was at least a little bit fluent in Hebrew. I thought I would help her by doing for her what my friends had done for me, by taking her to the airport and standing with her and helping her get through security. Oh, my God. It was a miserable experience. Because there was this white guy with this black woman, the first thing they did is they isolated us from everybody else and they took us last. We had to wait. We waited a long time. Finally, they brought in this super-duper

honcho to interview us. A very skeptical type of interview. It was a very aggressive interview. He really didn't understand why I was accompanying her. What even made me more irritated was that she didn't seem to mind all that much. Think about it. She's black. She's experienced this before in her life, and so she's come to accept it. Whether she likes it or not, she's come to accept it. I didn't like it. I thought it was racist. By the time I got home, I was furious. Kelly kept saying to me, "Maria has come to accept this. This is the world. Get used to it, Bub." I just thought it was demeaning and bad. It was a very negative experience.

There was more stuff about that year. I was trying to do some modeling of velocity structures in the universe. I did a major project. I was trying to do a major simulation project. It pretty much failed. (laughs) So I had less to show for that year. I made an investment and I took a risk and the risk didn't work. You move on.

But I loved being in Israel. The spirit of work, the spirit of can-do. It's one of the things I wanted to infuse myself with while I was there. I enjoyed working with a lot of the Israeli students because they were really bright.

But I have to tell you the story of our cat. (Reti laughs) And of our return trip. We had a cat named Blueberry. There was no way our kids would allow us to go to Israel if we didn't bring Blueberry with us, which was perfectly legal. That entailed a certain amount of bureaucracy. I had to go to the vet. I had to get some documents from the vet saying Blueberry was healthy and all that stuff. I had to pay the airline some outrageous sum of money for the right to put Blueberry under our seat during the flight. We did all of that. Everything was just fine and hunky dory. Except that again, on our flight, we missed our connection. Our flight was delayed and we missed our connection in New York. We were flying TWA, and we missed the TWA flight. So, they put us on a different airline, Tower

Airlines. I think at the time, Tower Airlines would not allow—it was an Israeli airline—it was not El Al. It was the cheap version of El Al. I think they wouldn't allow pets in the cabin.

And so, it was really, really, really awkward at twenty-five different levels. We get to security at Tower Airlines. The way they did security is they would bring you into a room by yourself. There was a line outside the room. And in that room, they would screen you. They would make you go through the magnetic detector. They would screen your carry-on luggage, etcetera. And the way you normally did it with a cat was you would take the cat out of the carrier, let everything else go through, and then you would walk through with the cat, which was what I expected to do.

So, I get in there. I took the cat out of the carrier. The guard looks at me and he says, "What the hell is that?" (laughter)

Reti: It's a tribble.

Blumenthal: (laughs) So I said, "It's a cat."

He said, "You can't bring that on the plane."

I said, "Of course I can bring it on the plane."

He said, "You can't bring it on the plane."

I said, "Of course I can bring it on the plane. I have all the appropriate paperwork." So, with my other hand I plunk down this pile of paper that I grabbed out of my carry-on. Most of it was astrophysical journal articles. I'm sure the real paperwork was in there somewhere, but I didn't even pretend to go find the real paperwork. I just plunked down

this big stack of papers. He looked at me. I said, “Look, I’m going to go through the magnetic thing.” So, I handed him the cat (laughter) and I walked through.

He said, “Does it bite?” (laughter)

I said, “No. It’s a gentle cat. It doesn’t bite.”

I walked through the security thing and then he handed me back the cat. He was just completely disgusted. He said, “Just go on.”

So, we got on the plane with the cat. I wasn’t sure that it was even allowed on the plane.

So, I said to Kelly, “We’re going to have to just pretend. Get him to go to sleep. I don’t want anyone to—”

Reti: Did you drug your cat? What did you do?

Blumenthal: We couldn’t drug the cat. We even had brought kitty litter in a little container so we could take him to the bathroom.

I assigned my kids to keep the cat quiet. It was a Siamese cat, so it meowed. They kept it pretty quiet. Nobody gave us any trouble. About three-quarters of the way through the flight, Kelly says to me, “The cat has to go to the bathroom.”

I said, “What do you mean? How do you know the cat has to go to the bathroom?”

She says, “He has to go the bathroom. It’s been too long.”

I said, “Are you going to take him to the bathroom?”

She says, “Yeah, I’ll do it.” So, she grabs the cat, she grabs our kitty litter, she grabs the little container.

Reti: Oh, god! (laughs)

Blumenthal: She goes to the bathroom. She puts him down on the floor. He's having a grand old time. This is a great little space to explore. He had no interest in doing his business. He just was exploring and purring. She waits with him for about ten or fifteen minutes. Finally, she gathers him up and brings him back and says, "No, he didn't do it." I said fine.

So, half hour later she says, "He's really got to go to the bathroom."

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs)

Blumenthal: So, she gathered it all up, brought him to the bathroom again. Sure enough, he pooped that time. She was right. Or peed. I don't know what he did, but he did his business. So, it was probably a good thing she had done that. But God, it was hard getting that cat over there. It was an indoor cat, which is good because rabies is rampant in Israel and they have feral cats all over the place. I mean, in our neighborhood, the way you did garbage, at least in French Hill in Israel, they would have out on the street these humongous garbage, what do you call, dumpsters. Twenty dumpsters would be out in the street. So, when you wanted to bring out garbage, you would bring it out to the street and put it in the dumpsters. The first time I did it, it scared the bejesus out of me. I opened the dumpster and about five cats jumped out. Cats were always at the dumpsters. They were often inside of them. You had to be really careful. I'm sure rabies was rampant. Our cat was an indoor cat. We never would allow the cat outside, so no problems. We made sure the cat had all appropriate shots and everything.

But then, we had to go home. Now the question was, how do we get the cat back into the country?

So, I went to the vet. I knew there was a procedure. I went to the vet and got all kinds of paperwork that all the shots were up to date and all this stuff. Then he says to me—I swear to you this story is true— he says to me, “On the Friday before you leave, you have to go to the Ministry of Agriculture on Friday morning and get some paperwork.” Now remember, in Israel, Friday afternoon, everything is closed. Friday is sort of a half day, and it’s not always even taken that seriously.

I said, “You sure it has to be on Friday? Can’t I go Thursday?”

He says, “No, it has to be on Friday. Friday morning, you’ve got to get this thing signed and stamped by the Ministry of Agriculture.” He said, “Don’t worry. Here’s the address.” He gave me the address. The address was on a street where the bus station was for Jerusalem, so I knew the street. He says, “It’s right by the bus station. Don’t worry.”

I said okay. But this is Israel, so I knew that I was going to have to worry. (Reti laughs)

So, the appointed day comes. Aaron was already gone. I had flown back with Aaron to put him in summer camp and then flown back to Israel for the move home. So, I asked Sarah if she’d come with me—she was happy to do that—with Blueberry. So, we got in the car and drove down to the bus station and parked. The address was supposed to be right across the street from the bus station. I don’t remember the address, but it was like 141 and then the name of the street. So, I went there. There was a little shopping area across the street. I went in the shopping area. I found 139, and I found 143. But I couldn’t find 141. I was completely puzzled. I started asking in the shops, “Where’s the Ministry of Agriculture, or where’s 141?” Nobody knew. Nobody knew what I was talking about. I was really scared because how were we going to get our cat home if we don’t get this stamp? I did everything reasonable to find this place and I couldn’t find it. But that’s not an excuse that you can use. I was just so frustrated.

So, I said to Sarah, “Look, Sarah, we’re going to walk up and down the street and just see if we can somehow, by a miracle, find this place.” So, we walked down the street. The numbers weren’t actually in order. I found 141 two blocks away. It was an abandoned building where the first floor was just gutted. There was nothing in the first floor. But it was 141. It had a sign, which I couldn’t read, but I was sure it didn’t say Ministry of Agriculture. But I said, “Let’s go in the building.”

So, we went in the building. The ground floor was completely gutted but there was a stairway. So, we went up the stairway to the second floor. There were offices on the second floor. I walked into one office and I said, “I’m looking for the veterinarian associated with the Ministry of Agriculture.”

He said, “That’s me.”

I said, “Great!” I breathed this huge sigh of relief. I said, “I need you to sign this form so I can get our cat back home to the U.S.” And I went in.

He said, “That will be twenty shekels.” And so, I gave him twenty shekels. He said, “I have to see the cat.”

I said, fine. So, I said to Sarah, “Take him out of the cat carrier.”

So literally the moment his ears cleared the opening of the cat carrier, the vet looked over and said, “He’s fine.” He signed the paper and gave me the paper.

I had been so scared. As we went into the veterinarian’s office, I said to Sarah, “Look, this is Israel. They cause problems here. Sometimes they just make it hard to do anything.” I said, “If there’s a problem, if I’m having a problem, I want you to cry.” (laughter) Because Israelis love children. “I want you to cry and tell him how important the cat is to you and we can’t leave the cat.”

Reti: How old was she at this point, about?

Blumenthal: She was in second grade. So, she was maybe seven.

Reti: Oh, so she was a little kid.

Blumenthal: So, we had the paperwork. And the irony is, when we went home, and I went to the airline desk to check in, I had all this paperwork. They didn't care about it and didn't even look at it. They just cared that I paid them the hundred dollars that was the fee for a carry-on cat. Then when we finally got to the U.S. and I thought, oh, good. I'm going to be so happy I have this paperwork. I went into the line that says, "something to declare." (Reti laughs) I got up to the guy, to the guard. He said to me, "Why are you in this line?" I said, "Because I'm bringing in a cat into the country." He said, "Well, let me ask you this. Is it an American cat?" There was a part of me that wanted to be really snide and say, "It's a Siamese cat," but I didn't. (Reti laughs) I just said, "Yes. It's an American cat." He said, "No problem. Go ahead." So, no one ever wanted to look at the paperwork. (laughs)

Reti: American citizenship, to the cat. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But the irony is that I'm sure that if I didn't have the paperwork, I could never have pulled it off. He would have sensed it and I would have gotten—

Reti: It gave you the confidence.

Blumenthal: So, I do want to tell you something else about that trip home, though, because it was a very emotionally wrenching trip. It was just Sarah, Kelly and me, and the cat. We flew from Tel Aviv to New York, from New York to Saint Louis, and then from Saint Louis home, probably to San Francisco. After we got on the plane, the stewardess came over to us and said, "Do you see that woman over there with the young baby?" We

said yeah. She said, “She’s flying, like you, to Saint Louis. Could you look after her? She’s got a really difficult story. And it’s a lot like the book.” I’m not sure she told us which book. Or maybe she did, and it took me a minute to understand what she meant. But the book she was referring to was called *Not Without My Daughter*.¹²⁸

There’s a woman who wrote a book, it’s well worth reading, but maybe not when you have young children. It’s about a woman in the U.S. who marries a doctor who’s Iranian, I think. She moves to Iran and then she has children there. But he treats her as almost a slave. His family treats her like a less-than human individual. I think she may have even been beaten. She ends up having a couple of kids. Finally, she figures out she can go to the American embassy and ask for help. They offer to help get her out of the country, but the children don’t have passports. She says she will not leave without her children. And the rest of the book is about how he continues to abuse her and how terrible life is there. Finally, she decides to make a break for the border with Turkey. So, she gets somebody to help her. I don’t remember the details, but they have this long journey to get to Turkey with the children, and lots of adventures. She eventually gets to the border. She’s okay and she gets to go back home with her kids to the U.S. It’s a really moving, tearjerker kind of book. Anyway, that’s the book she was referring to.

So, we went to this woman and we talked to her. She was from Toledo, Ohio. She had a little boy with her. She had met her husband, who was a Palestinian, and they had fallen in love and gotten married. She got married and went to live in Palestine, the West Bank, or whatever. Her husband treated her like dirt, abused her. They had, I think they had three kids, two girls and a boy. The girls were older than the boy and they lived with his family, who treated her like less than dirt. She was full of stories about how it was. She’d clearly been abused, and she was clearly a victim of domestic violence.

And at a certain point, she decided she couldn't stay, but she couldn't figure out how to take her kids with her. So, she decided to figure out how to leave with her son. Because the way she figured it was, that the husband really didn't care about the daughters, because they were girls, and she'd get them later, somehow. But that if she could get out with her son, that's what he cared about.

So, she somehow snuck away. It was not easy, but she went to the American embassy in Tel Aviv and got a passport for herself and for her son. They got her an airplane ticket to the U.S. They didn't give her any money. She had no money with her. But she was at least on this flight and she was flying back to Ohio. I think she was going to stay with her uncle in Ohio.

We had a fairly long layover in New York. I had to feed my kid. So, I fed them and her kid, as well. I stayed with her while Kelly went off. We didn't have any phone credit cards at that point because we didn't have a phone. We were living out of the country. So, Kelly went and somehow got this humongous bag of quarters and she got on the phone to Israel. She talked to a bunch of people and she eventually got her an attorney in Israel who could fight for custody of the two girls.

Reti: Oh, my God, it's giving me chills. That's intense.

Blumenthal: It took Kelly several hours to do it, but we had a long layover in New York before our flight to Saint Louis. Kelly doesn't take no for an answer easily. She had all these legal contacts in Israel. Meanwhile, I'm talking to the woman. I don't know a lot, but I knew a little bit about domestic violence. Of course, Kelly's now written two books on domestic violence.¹²⁹ But I wasn't completely dumb. I told her, I said, "Look, you know, your husband is going to try to contact you. He's going to try to persuade you that he's so sorry about the way he treated you and get you to come back. And you can't do it. And you

need to be even careful about agents. You need to take your passport and you need to keep it someplace separate from where you're living. You have to harden yourself to the fact that he is going to call you, and he is going to tell you how sorry he is and how much he loves you, and that he's going to want you back and could you please just come back."

She assured me there was just no way on God's green earth that she was ever going back. She did say she'd keep her passports in a safe place so he couldn't get to them, someplace other than where she was. So, I really did have that conversation with her.

Then Kelly gave her the name of the lawyer in Israel and said that it was all arranged, that she would represent her for free. Kelly also said to her that when we got back home, she would make some calls and she would get her a lawyer in Ohio, so that she could have representation at that end as well, and that she would endeavor to find somebody who would represent her for free.

We were on the same flight to Saint Louis. But in Saint Louis we got another flight to California, and she got a flight to Ohio. So, we came out to California and I think we stayed in a hotel the first night somewhere. Then we moved back into our house the next day. And it was very frustrating for me because as we were moving back into the house, Kelly was on the phone the whole time. Somehow, we had a phone already, maybe because the renters had left the phone, I don't know. But she was on the phone all day, or a good chunk of time, to Ohio, finding a family law attorney who could represent this woman, which she finally did. She found somebody who would represent her pro bono. And then, of course, Kelly helped me move stuff back into the house.

Then she called Ohio to get in touch with this woman to convey what she had been able to do. She talked to the uncle, or somebody. And that person said, "She's already left to go back to Israel. "The husband had called her and convinced her that he really loved her,

that he was sorry for everything that had happened, and that she just had to come back to Israel. It's a very typical story for abused women. It was heartbreaking because, as Kelly and I said to each other, he's probably going to kill her. It was just heartbreaking. I wanted to try to find her in Israel. Kelly didn't. She just wanted to wash her hands of it. To this day, I don't ever discuss this with her. This is just so painful.

Reti: Yes. It's a painful story.

Blumenthal: But it says something about our society, or the world we live in. I'm so disappointed, because honest to God, I had talked to this woman about not being in contact, not letting him persuade you that everything was right. It almost brings tears to my eyes when I think about this. But that was our trip home. (sighs)

I remember when I came home, I took Aaron home a couple of weeks early because he went to some camp in the Sierras. I rented a car and dropped him off. I remember thinking oh my God, it is so quiet here. Nobody's honking. People are respecting traffic laws. It was just day and night. There were lines, and people stayed in them. But anyway, that was coming home from Israel.

I think we learned a lot that year about the world, about life. Our kids hated it. They felt there was nothing to do. Our son joined a basketball league at our urging, because he loved to play basketball in the U.S. But he hated it there, partly because he didn't speak the language well enough. He did not know how to say basketball in Hebrew. But partly it was because what would have been regarded as egregious fouls in the U.S. were just tolerated there and he just didn't like playing by those rules. He did have some friends, but they weren't as nice as you would expect. They were Israeli. They were more accepting of the rough and tumble.

Sarah had some friends, too. I think she did maybe a little bit better than Aaron did. But both kids did not enjoy their year in Israel. When we came back I joked with them about maybe we'd go back for another year. They said, "If you do that, we're going to report you for child abuse." (Reti laughs)

While I was in Israel, I did try to learn Hebrew. I took a course that they offered for graduate students and postdocs from foreign countries. I was by far the oldest person in the class, which met several times a week. It was very self-revelatory. I'm pretty smart, but I'm not particularly skilled at languages. In this class, though, I was a student again. The old juices started to flow, the old competitive juices. I could not let anyone else be better than me in that class. (Reti laughs) I would spend hours studying the material because I just had to be able to do it. The students, graduate students and the postdocs, found this so easy. They slurped it up. They enjoyed the class without doing any work. I struggled to keep up with them. Eventually, I think near the end of the year I dropped out. I just couldn't keep it up. I had other things to do. It brought home to me that as you get older, it gets harder and harder to learn a new language.

But one of the things that was so amusing in the class was one day the instructor took us through an exercise of answering the phone. She had us do various exercises. One of the exercises was the wrong number. This was all in Hebrew. Basically, the exercise kind of went like this. "Hello?" "Hello, may I speak with Moshe?" "Well, there is no Moshe here. I think maybe you have the wrong number." "Well, are you sure that Moshe isn't there?" (laughter) "No, no, this is our home." "Well, can you please check, go around and check to see if Moshe is—" (laughter) I mean, that's a wrong number in Israel.

Academic Senate Service at UC Santa Cruz

Reti: So, today is December 10, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I'm here for my thirteenth session in the oral history that George Blumenthal and I are doing together.

Blumenthal: So, I wanted to start talking a little bit about some of my senate service. I may have mentioned a little bit already, but certainly not a lot. When I first came to the campus, even as an assistant professor, I did join a senate committee, CAFA, the Committee on Admission and Financial Aid, which I think I served on for a couple of years. What was most memorable to me about that experience was that I got to meet interesting people from other departments, most of whom were much more senior than me. In those days, it was legitimate for an assistant professor to serve on a senate committee. Today, we don't do that as a matter of course. But that was my first senate committee for a while, until after I got tenure.

Then after I got tenure, they asked me if I would serve on the Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections, which I think I did for probably four, maybe even five years. It was a long time that I served on that, at least four years. And it was interesting, because it's one of the global committees. So, I interacted with the leaders of the senate office. I had to, because I was leading the committee that oversaw all the rules of the senate, and the elections of the senate.

Reti: What do you mean by global, George?

Blumenthal: I wasn't just working with some analyst in the senate office. I was working with the senate director, who was then Julie Dryden-Brown, although it wasn't Brown then. And it was interesting. We didn't have a lot of really divisive issues on the campus in those days. The only one I could remember offhand, but there may have been others, was an issue about faculty having voting rights in departments, whether or not there was

some deadline for them to exercise their voting rights, which I think we supported. That is, it's one thing to have a right to vote, but like in any election, you need to get your absentee ballot in on time. And I think that that hadn't always been the case. I do remember that issue came up, but I didn't see it as a deep or a particularly difficult issue. We were involved in all of the elections, which I kind of minded, because that meant I had to count the votes when there were mailed ballots.

Reti: Are we talking the 1980s here?

Blumenthal: We're probably talking about roughly 1980, yeah, the early 1980s. But I remember we counted the votes on all the elections, which was a pain. But we had to do it, because we had to certify that the election—and in those days, a mail ballot was literally a mail ballot. It came in the mail. But other than consulting on certain rules issues sort of informally with the senate staff, I don't really remember any huge, divisive issues coming down the line, other than the voting rights issue.

However, after I'd been on the committee for a year, somebody called me up and said, "We have an opportunity to get a Santa Cruz representative on the university-wide Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction. Would you be amenable to a three-year term?" But that meant I had to be the chair of the committee for three more years. (That's why I was sure that it was at least four.) And I think I served on it before I became chair, so it had to have been at least five, maybe six years. I think it was chaired by Wayne Brumback the first year I was on it.

Anyway, I agreed to do it. I was very lucky, because those three years the chair of the systemwide committee was a guy at UCLA by the name of Rosenthal. I think he was in linguistics or speech or something like that. But he was really, really good. He was

awesome good. When issues came up, he just cut to the chase. He was fantastic in analyzing issues. I was so, so impressed by him.

We dealt with a whole range of issues that came up systemwide at the time. One of them I remember was an interesting one. That was the period in which the university proposed to make clinical X faculty members of the Academic Senate. Just to explain to you, in medical schools there's medical faculty and then there's clinical faculty who deal with patients, but also serve to lead students on rounds and stuff like that. But they're not research faculty. They just deal with patients.

Reti: So, they're teaching and they deal with patients, but they're not researchers.

Blumenthal: They don't do research. They're kind of the analog of a lecturer. But there's an intermediate type of faculty called clinical X who are clinical faculty. They may not start their own research programs, but they gather data and they do data things as a part of research that's being done. So, there was a proposal to make the clinical X faculty members of the Academic Senate. That came to us as a proposal; UCR&J has to rule on any legislation that comes forward. And this was more than legislation. This would have to go to the regents.

So, the clinical X faculty were being proposed for membership in the Academic Senate. Generally speaking, people were okay with that, or fine with it, or even supportive of it. But then some of the medical schools started arguing that there should be an upper limit on the number of clinical X faculty in any department that could be members of the Academic Senate. When that came to us, we basically said no, that this is like pregnancy: you're either pregnant, or you're not pregnant.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: You're either a member of the senate by virtue of your position, or you're not a member of the senate. Putting some limit on the numbers made absolutely no sense. So that was what our ruling was on that one.

Anyway, I was very happy on UCR&J. Rosenthal did all the work; he did the analysis; he was very sensible. We didn't meet very often at all, maybe once a year at most. He had things very much in hand. So, I was very, very happy with him. Until this big dispute happened at UCLA. The dispute got ruled on by the UCLA Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction. Then an appeal was lodged with the university-wide committee and I was asked to lead that. So, I very calmly said, "Goodness, just send me the material and I'll read through it and I'll contact the other members of the committee and we'll figure it out." (laughter) Little did I know that they would be sending me phone books-thick files of stuff. It all had to do with interpretation of language, primarily in the APM.

Reti: Academic Personnel Manual?

Blumenthal: Academic Personnel Manual. And there were long discourses from people at UCLA, including linguists, on the word "is," i-s, and whether it was inclusive or exclusive. I mean, it was long. In terms of how to interpret some sentences in the Academic Personnel Manual, far beyond anything I could ever hope to imagine figuring out.

So, I read through all of this stuff and then I dutifully sent it to the other remaining members of the committee and asked them if they had any insights, which none of them claimed to have. I thought we were really up the creek. So, I went through the material again and read through it all. It was very unclear how to interpret this APM section, until I realized, all of a sudden, that it was irrelevant, that this was an issue that actually pitted the by-laws of the senate against the APM. And since the issue involved was faculty voting

and faculty rights, the by-laws trumped the APM. Therefore, it's irrelevant how the wording is in the APM. All that's relevant is what the wording is in the by-laws, which were relatively clear on the question at hand, I thought. So, it was easy. I called up the other members of the committee. I ran this past them. They were delighted that we had a way out of this morass. I issued a ruling, which of course delighted Rosenthal because it confirmed what he had ruled on at UCLA, although I think the reasoning may have been different. So, we eventually got through it and it was kind of fun to do that.

Of course, we also had to review all the legislation, but I don't think anything particularly noteworthy came up in that. So that was a fun kind of senate service. And it wasn't all that controversial. It was kind of cool.

So, the next thing that I did both before and after I went to Israel: I served on the Committee on Privilege and Tenure. I was still relatively unfamiliar with senate committees. I had done something very early on, but I wasn't that heavily involved. And then R&J was kind of a weird committee to be on. But then they put me on Privilege and Tenure. The huge advantage of being on Privilege and Tenure at that time was that the chair was Murray Baumgarten.¹³⁰ And you could not imagine a more fair, more decent person to chair a committee like that, right? I mean, just a good man from the top of his head to the bottom of his toes. It was a pleasure to work with him and we dealt with some interesting and difficult issues. One of the people on the committee was Angela Davis. She was on it, too. And actually, she was fine to work with. In fact, there were a couple of times when I felt like my positions were more radical than hers.

Reti: (laughs) That's funny.

Blumenthal: Which I found interesting. Anyway, we dealt with one issue that had come to us (and it probably shouldn't have come to us), had to do with some of the disputes

between a woman named Gillian Greensite, who was then the director of Rape Prevention on campus, and some of the folks in Student Affairs, and as I later gather, also some of the folks in Title IX. And somehow—and I think Angela wanted this—we got involved in looking at this. There was a huge, in my opinion, mistake, that we got involved in this because it really wasn't a faculty rights issue. And to say the least, it really caused irritation between Francisco Hernandez, who was then the vice chancellor of student affairs and who oversaw that center, and some of the faculty on the committee who had advocated for taking on the issue.¹³¹

There were other issues. I learned so many good things about the committee structure at the time. One of the things we dealt with were grievances, or potential grievances, from faculty. One grievance was from a young assistant professor in a division different than mine. She, as I recall, had three complaints about her mid-career appraisal. So, the committee always looked at those seriously and we looked at it. I guess I was in the minority. I felt that of her three complaints, two of them were not legitimate complaints, on their face. That is, even if all of her allegations were true, it wouldn't actually constitute a grievance. Her third one did constitute a grievance, but I thought it would be really hard to prove it. The other members of the committee disagreed with me and felt that all three actually warranted moving forward with the grievance.

So, what the committee did, what our standard practice was, to have two members of the committee go meet with the complainant, with the grievant. I was asked to be one of the two and we arranged to have this meeting in my office. And it was interesting because the other member of the committee who was supposed to meet with me and the grievant, somehow at the last minute couldn't do it and didn't come. So, it was just me. So, I had to, on the one hand, explain the committee's position, and on the other hand, explain my own reticence, although I wanted to be clear that I was alone. I did it. And she was really

good. She understood my view. I had a sense she might have even agreed with it to some extent. But I also assured her that we could go forward as a committee to investigate this. I was quite impressed with how this particular grievant took in the feedback that I was giving her. Then we just started chatting. And then it turned out that there was a procedure in her department that appalled me. She told me that her department never provided input on outside letter writers, and that it was just done by the chair, who just simply made up a list of people to write to on his own.

I pointed out to her that there's a requirement in the APM that there has to be consultation with the department, and that, in fact, in my department, our long tradition was that we would meet as an entire department and we would put up on the board a list of names, and we'd pare it down and we would collectively agree on who we'd write to, which is probably overkill in terms of what the rules required, but nevertheless, I think, is a good practice. So, I told her that you can go forward with your grievances, but to me, if you're going to be up for tenure in a year or two, this issue just totally transcends that other one. It was very interesting. Anyway, this person did ultimately go on to get tenure and has led a very, very distinguished career and has been extremely successful. So, I'm very, very pleased about that.

But I think the main thing that I took away from that experience was the decency of Murray. It was just such a pleasure to work on a committee chaired by Murray. There isn't a mean bone in that man's body. And we were dealing with some yucky stuff. And yes, we dealt with some of the yucky stuff I'll tell you a little bit later, at least in its early stages. But it never rose to a level that I got all that emotionally attached to some of that yucky stuff. That meant either other people dealt with it, or it never advanced very far. It waited to become a major issue until I chaired the committee. (Reti laughs)

Meanwhile, in parallel, I have to say a little bit about the infamous Bob Meister case. Let me tell you a little bit about that. Bob Meister was a faculty member in social sciences and in legal studies. I think this was around the end of the Stevens chancellorship and the beginning of Pister. Meister was the chair of legal studies. As near as I can tell what happened, or as near as I can remember what happened, there was some discussion about major cuts to legal studies, or even eliminating it, that took place in a divisional meeting with the dean, that the dean regarded as being confidential. And Bob, after the meeting with the chairs, chose to advertise widely this potential fate for the program. So, the wrath of God came down on Bob and he was removed as the chair of the program, which at some level would have been just fine if all they had done was said, “We’re angry at you for violating confidentiality,” or, “We’re angry at you and exercising our discretion because your position is an at-will position, we’re removing you from the position.” If that had been all that happened, this whole thing would have ended. But instead, he met with the EVC, I gather, who I think was Michael [Tanner] at the time, and who announced that he was being removed for cause. And when you remove even an administrator for cause, there are certain rights that that person has. Meister argued not only did he have rights as an administrator, he also had faculty rights that were violated when this happened.

So, push came to shove. It was nasty. Lots of anger. Lots of disgust. You name it. And at the end of the day, Meister decided to sue. He filed suit against the university. The university defended itself, and to make a long story short, ultimately the university and Meister came to an agreement and a settlement. Their settlement was that he would withdraw his suit in exchange for some extra leave, which I assume was sabbatical leave. So that was the upshot of that piece of it.

The issue of attorney’s fees came up—whether or not Meister should be reimbursed for attorney’s fees. Ultimately, the courts ruled—and including an appeals court ruling, I

think incorrectly, by the way—that because he got a sabbatical, that was compensation and therefore that exceeded what he had been offered as a settlement originally, and therefore he did not deserve attorney’s fees. So, he had to eat his attorney’s fees, which I think ran into some, I think, hundreds of thousands of dollars. I think he was fairly well-to-do, so I think he could afford it. But it was a lot of money.

This whole set of events had taken place kind of behind the scenes. Nobody knew about it, even though court cases and settlements are public. A group of faculties decided that this was something that the faculty writ large should know about. So, a group of five faculty members got together to write a report which outlined what had happened in this case. I was actually asked to be a member of that group, and I think originally I agreed to do it, although I had a misgiving because I think I was on Privilege and Tenure at the time, and I thought maybe that wasn’t wise.

But even more importantly, when they were going to do it, I was out of town. So, it didn’t even rise to the level of making a decision. But I do remember being asked. I knew Meister. He and I would occasionally have lunch together, actually, semi-regularly. Every month or two we’d have lunch together. I found him to be a really smart and interesting guy.

But in any event, they wrote this report based upon public court records. And subsequent to writing that report, they got a letter from David Birnbaum, who was then the General Counsel for Santa Cruz, basically threatening them that if they moved forward to disseminate that report, they could be liable for violating confidentiality or something, I forget what, exactly. But it was certainly a letter that threatened legal consequences.

Subsequently, I didn’t know this at the time, but subsequently I’ve come to believe that he wrote that letter probably at the direction of the then-chancellor, who was probably Pister. That’s what I think today. But at any rate, Birnbaum wrote the letter and signed it.

So, there was a senate meeting in which there was a very angry discussion of this report, because those who wrote the report and their supporters argued that all they had done was go to court records, and that nothing in this report wasn't already public, and for them to get a threatening letter from the university lawyer threatening legal action was a form of intimidation.

As a result of that letter, one of the five authors actually dropped off the report. And so, the final version of that report only included four of the five authors. But it left a lot of angry people, particularly angry faculty relative to the Office of General Counsel. We'll come back to that story; we'll pick it up a little bit later.

Okay. So that's all I wanted to say about the Meister matter.

I served for two or three years on Privilege and Tenure. Went off on sabbatical. And when I came back, they appointed me to be the chair of Privilege and Tenure. And as chair of Privilege and Tenure, I was also *ex officio* a member of the university-wide Committee on Privilege and Tenure.

That started my involvement there. So, I want to talk about the next three years when I chaired Privilege and Tenure, and the two years of those three when I chaired the university-wide Committee on Privilege and Tenure, which I did, I think, simultaneously. Then I'm going to come back and talk about how it was to be a member of the senate executive committee by virtue of being on Privilege and Tenure.

Reti: That makes sense.

Blumenthal: All right. So, I chaired Privilege and Tenure for three years and it was pretty godawful. It was a really pretty bad three years. Prior to my becoming chair of Privilege and Tenure, there had never been a hearing, disciplinary or grievance hearing

on the campus for the previous fifteen years. It had been fifteen years since there had been a hearing on campus. Maybe that just means everybody was well-behaved, or maybe it means people didn't want to bring those hearings. Whatever the reasons were, we were fifteen years without.

Reti: Okay, so now give me roughly what time period we're talking about now that you become chair?

Blumenthal: The late '90s. It was after I got back from Israel. So, my first year as chair of Privilege and Tenure, we had two hearings. And as I pointed out to people, this was all my fault. Obviously. (laughter) . It serves no purpose to go into the details of these two disciplinary cases, but there are a couple of aspects that I think are important to mention.

In both cases, which were very different, the committee found a violation of the faculty code of conduct and decided to recommend a suspension from the faculty without salary. In one case it was for two quarters and in the other case it was for one quarter. We also recommended something that was outside of our authority—we recommended to the chancellor that the accused be excused from one quarter of the suspension if certain conditions were met.

I remember I even went to M.R.C. Greenwood, because our report went to M.R.C. She was the final decision maker. She gets to make whatever decision she wanted. I know I had told M.R.C. at one point when I was appointed chair of P&T that I had only one request. I said, "I'll promise to give you reasonable reports and recommendations, as long as you promise to follow them." I said, "I don't want to get into a fight with you." Because a fight between P&T and chancellor is not a good thing for the campus.

To M.R.C.'s credit, throughout those three years, she went out of her way in every instance to be in agreement with the committee, to the point that she would draft a letter of

decision and she would run it past me before sending it, and accept my changes, even. I give her a lot of credit. She knew where she wanted to fight her battles. I would not have wanted to fight with her on this, but I would have had to stay true to my principles.

In any event, she accepted. Even though we were outside of our authority, she accepted the recommendation.

I might just add that although there are now mechanisms in place for the committee to get legal advice from General Counsel. I refused legal advice while I was chair of P&T from General Counsel, because I was still sensitive to the fact that David Birnbaum had written that letter some years earlier. So, it was impossible, I felt, to get all of the faculty to feel comfortable getting advice from that group. I certainly changed my tune as soon as I could because I do believe in the capabilities of the Office of General Counsel. But I really wanted to be sensitive to how people felt about it. So, in fact, I was able to get the chancellor to allocate funding to hire Dick Wasserstrom, who was a faculty member here; I think by then he may have been retired. But he's a lawyer and he did provide legal advice to the committee.

As chair of P&T, I also did other things, like changes in the bylaws on campus. I've done a lot, as you'll hear in a few minutes, about bylaw changes systemwide. But I thought if we're going to do the systemwide bylaws, we should do the campus as well. So, we made a number of changes to make the campus bylaws relating to Privilege and Tenure much more workable. We clarified when the EVC has to go to the charges committee, which somehow hadn't been clarified before. I even lobbied the EVC. I argued that we should make the charges committee a senate committee, which it is on some campuses. But he really didn't want to go there. Since the charges committee is under the control of the

administration, that was legitimately his choice. No argument there. But anyway, I had a lot of fun working on some of these local by-law changes, most of which are still in effect, as near as I can tell. So that was pretty much chairing Privilege and Tenure. I'm going to come back to serving on the executive committee as a consequence of that.

Serving on the Systemwide Committee on Privilege and Tenure

Let me turn now to the university-wide Committee on Privilege & Tenure. The first year I was on it, it was chaired by a woman from San Diego who honestly wasn't that good a chair. I remember sitting in that committee. We met a bunch of times. Half the time it wasn't clear to me what we were doing. What was clear was that we were taking a look at the senate bylaws on hearings. The systemwide senate bylaws are much more proscriptive in terms of how the hearings are held than the campus bylaws. The campus bylaws just sort of fill in a few local blanks, but the systemwide bylaws are the fundamental law of the land.

There was an effort to change some of those bylaws, or to clarify some of those bylaws. I didn't get it. These were not being written by the committee. There was somebody at the Office of the President who worked in Academic Affairs who was a lawyer and was taking the lead on doing this, but doing this under the aegis of UCP&T. I just plain didn't get it. There was another issue that was going forward with the legislation that year from UCP&T, which I also didn't agree with. I agreed with the idea of bylaw changes, although I didn't like the way it was being handled.

The other issue was one I really couldn't get behind. I wasn't particularly active in opposing it, but I didn't support it. So even before any of that happened, I had just been appointed to UCP&T. I got a letter, an email, from somebody who I didn't know named Aimeé Dorr. She wanted me to serve on some task force about something. And I didn't

know who Aimeé Dorr was. She didn't have a signature at the bottom of her email saying who she was. I had no idea where this was coming from. So, I did what I usually do in such cases. I ignored it. (laughter) Then Helene Moglen, who was chair of the Santa Cruz division, came to me and said, "Why are you ignoring Aimeé Dorr's emails?"

I said, "Who's Aimeé Dorr?"¹³²

She said, "She's the chair of the systemwide senate."

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So on that particular task force, I think time had passed, so I wasn't going to be on it, and that was just fine with me. But Aimeé reached out to me when the Academic Council was going to meet on the Santa Cruz campus because that was the day they were taking up this legislation that I didn't agree with. Aimeé called me and said, "We're going to be meeting at Santa Cruz. We'll be considering this legislation. And if there are questions, can I call on you to come to the meeting?"

I said, "Yeah, but Aimeé, I'm not a supporter of this. I have real second thoughts about whether this is a good idea."

That wasn't what Aimeé wanted to hear, of course. And anyway, so she said fine, she'd call me if she needed me. Thank God she didn't call me. That particular piece of legislation never made it through. At a certain point, the Office of General Counsel objected to it. Again, I don't remember what it was. I just remember it didn't strike me as the best thing. But anyway, that was my introduction to Aimeé. I thought she was actually kind of nice when I said I wasn't really supportive of it.

Next time I saw Aimeé, I was in Oakland, probably for one of these meetings. I ran into her. I went to her and I said, "Look, Aimeé, there's something I don't understand. Can you

please explain it to me?” She said, sure. I said, “I don’t understand why we’re considering these bylaw changes on the committee but the work’s being done by somebody in Academic Affairs. Shouldn’t it be done by a staff member of the committee? Shouldn’t the committee be in control of this?”

She said, “You’re right.” She said, “That’s not what’s happening?”

I said, “That’s not what’s happening.” So that was my second interaction with Aimeé.

My third interaction with Aimeé was in some ways the most fascinating I ever had with her. So she called me up one day out of the blue and she said, “I want you to come to Oakland because we’re going to interview two lawyers from the Office of General Counsel.” It had already been decided that the senate would pick a lawyer from OGC to serve as the advisor to local privilege and tenure committees. Remember, I alluded to that before.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: At least locally, I wasn’t ready to do that yet, though I thought the idea was a good one for the system. Anyway, she said, “So they’ve identified two lawyers. I want you to come up and interview the lawyers with me. The two of us will do the interview.”

I said, “But Aimeé, this doesn’t make sense. I’m not chairing the committee. You should invite the chair of the committee.”

She said, “I don’t want to invite her. I want to invite you.”

So I said okay. It took a little persuading, but I did it. So I went up there to interview these two lawyers. It was a fascinating moment and an unforgettable moment. So there were these two lawyers, one of whom was Carole Rossi.¹³³ And the other one was another

woman lawyer from OGC. We interviewed them at the same time. It wasn't like we interviewed one and then interviewed the other.

Reti: Oh. my goodness. (laughs)

Blumenthal: We interviewed them at the same time because they were both from the same office, and the office was going to assign somebody. I would say easily a quarter, maybe halfway through the interview, it was obvious that Carole Rossi was going to be the one. She was so good, so much better than you could ever imagine. So it was totally clear to me. But we had to do all the rest of the interview.

But at a certain point in the interview, the other lawyer, the one we didn't choose, said, quite innocently, she certainly didn't mean anything by it—we were talking about the fact that she would have to be isolated from the rest of OGC in order to do this job. There's a way of doing legal firewalls. And she said, "Oh, yes. Well, we've had other—" She worked in some unit, I don't know, an HR unit or something, I don't know which one. She said, "There have been other lawyers from our units who have represented the university before in Privilege and Tenure Committee meetings," by which she meant prosecuted in Privilege and Tenure Committee meetings.

When she said that, Aimeé went ballistic. I'd almost never seen somebody go so ballistic. She started screaming and yelling. Her point was at a Privilege and Tenure hearing there's three parties and all of them have lawyers. There's the committee; there's the prosecution; the EVC is represented by counsel; and there's the defendant who's represented by counsel. And the committee and the defendant and the EVC are all members of the university community. So the lawyers representing each of them are representing, in some sense, the university. But she had meant, when she said, "the university," only the prosecutor. I think that's what she meant. She didn't mean anything by it. It was kind of

an innocent mistake. But Aimeé went ballistic. She literally started screaming. (laughter) I'm sitting there, trying to think of what to do. I tried to calm her down. I don't know what I said. But she turned to me and she said something like, "Oh, come on. My husband tries to do the same thing. Stop it!"

Reti: Oh my God! (laughter)

Blumenthal: Finally things calmed down and we went on with the interview. We finished the interview. Afterwards, Aimeé and I put our heads together. We were completely in agreement that Carole was the one. By the way, Carole did this for several years and received kudos up and down the system. Everyone loved Carole in that role.

I have wondered ever since, and I don't know the answer to that question, whether or not Aimeé really did lose her cool and was completely irrational for a few minutes, or whether or not she'd already decided it was going to be Carole, so she was going to put on some theater for Carole to sensitize Carole to some of the issues that would be involved. To this day, I don't know.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: I've wondered about that. I've interacted a lot with Aimeé since then in many different roles. I still don't know the answer to that question.

There was one other issue that we were considering during that first year that I was on the committee. It was the issue of incompetence. That had been discussed for a number of years at the university, what the standards were for faculty incompetence—how do you prove incompetence, and what do you do?

Reti: By faculty responsibilities, are we talking about research, teaching, service, everything?

Blumenthal: That's part of the debate.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: So the issue had become more urgent, even though the discussion had gone on for many years. The issue arose because if a faculty member is incompetent and you try to get rid of them, without a policy on incompetence, the only way to get rid of them is through the faculty code of conduct. And it doesn't seem quite right to treat an incompetent faculty member as a disciplinary problem. So it made sense to have a policy and procedures on incompetence. Furthermore, the issue became more urgent when Congress enacted a new law which eliminated retirement age. So we knew that this was going to become an increasing problem. On that point, virtually everyone was in agreement. That led to two questions: in what areas does incompetence count; and then what are the procedures to determine incompetence? In terms of the areas, the senate wanted incompetence to be determined by a holistic review of research, teaching, and service. Dick Atkinson, who was president, wanted it to be incompetence in either teaching or research. That battle raged on, apparently for a long time.

Reti: Do you know what Atkinson's reason was for wanting to define incompetence this way?

Blumenthal: Actually, I don't. I suspect it was he wanted to make it easy. He would argue if somebody's a completely incompetent teacher, why should we have them on the faculty, for example.

So that battle raged on. At the end of the day, Dick was going to win this one, because this was a policy that lives within the APM. I argued on the committee—this was an issue that I did take a lot of interest in—that if we were going to lose the issue of the criteria, then we damn well better not lose the issue of the procedures. My point was that we should

make it as difficult as possible to do this. So basically, we wrote the policy (and it still is the policy), that it requires first a complete review by the Academic Personnel process, which takes almost a year to do in order to determine someone is incompetent. Then, assuming that determination is made, it has to go to the campus Committee on Privilege and Tenure for a formal hearing on the issue of incompetence. Only after both of those take place, can it go forward to the regents.

So we put in every procedural safeguard in the book, since we couldn't win on the criteria. So, just to stay with that for a moment, if you fast forward to the next year, we redid the bylaws—I'll come to that in just a minute—I rewrote the bylaws on dismissal from the university to basically include just the words "good cause," because I wanted it to be written as vaguely as possible, but with enough meat on there that you could actually do it.

I remember when I saw Bob Meister one day for lunch, he said to me, "You're brilliant!"

I said, "What do you mean I'm brilliant?" Of course, I'm brilliant. No. (Reti laughs) "What do you mean I'm brilliant?"

He said he saw this rule that I had written. He said, "You lost the battle on the criteria. But once you've written it as good cause, good cause is good cause, and it's however you define it. So you won in the end."

It's funny. He was telling me I was brilliant for something that I didn't really know I was brilliant about.

But anyway, we got the incompetence policy through. It is what it is. I remember when it came through (laughs) I happened to see M.R.C. M.R.C. noted it and said, "Now we have this great mechanism to get rid of incompetent faculty."

I said to her, “M.R.C., don’t use it. You do not want to be the first campus that uses this policy. Don’t use it, please.” (laughter)

Reti: Did she?

Blumenthal: I don’t think she did. Not to my knowledge. It has been used since then. I will tell you this. It is extremely rare for it to be used all the way through to completion. It has happened. But the number of times it’s happened in all of the ensuing years, you can count on the fingers of one hand.

Reti: And that’s systemwide.

Blumenthal: Systemwide. What has happened much more frequently is that the process is begun, and in the course of the process, somebody has been persuaded to retire. One case I know quite well on this campus happened while I was chancellor. It was somebody I know very, very well. He had clearly become incompetent. This wasn’t close, in my opinion. But he was very resistant. He did not accept that he was incompetent. He thought it was his colleagues being jealous of him. He even came to see me to talk about it with me. Of course, I couldn’t talk about it substantively. So it went through, I believe, on this campus, the full CAP process and was heading to P&T when ultimately, I didn’t do it, but I certainly would have approved had I known about it at the time, we did something that was probably illegal. We contacted his wife and told her what was going on and explained to her the consequences. And she basically pushed him into retiring.

So it ended up with a happy ending motivated by really something that was outside of appropriate, because there’s privacy issues and stuff. But it was not motivated out of meanness. It was motivated out of a desire to save everybody the embarrassment of going through with this.

Reti: So George, as I was listening to you talk about your committee service, it occurred to me that not every professor of astrophysics would be interested in venturing into this territory. Some might find it dull, or too dramatic, or who knows what. So I wondered what drives your interest in these kinds of more administrative, senate service types of activities?

Blumenthal: It's a fair question. By that time, I'd been a faculty member for a long time. I had done research; I'd had some success in my research. But I was looking for some new stimuli, something new that would be engaging, interesting, and challenging in other ways. So that's one of the reasons I was happy to start doing more senate service and taking more of a leadership role in the senate. I really was looking for something that could use my skills but would be challenging in a different way. Not that I was bored with research or astronomy, I just wanted something different.

That was also the reason why I agreed when I was asked to be a co-author on *21st Century Astronomy*. Writing a book on elementary astronomy was not something I'd thought about. I had thought about writing an advanced book. But when I was offered the opportunity and thought about it, I thought, what the hell? This might be interesting. It might be challenging. So I agreed to do it, just to do something different. That was really what was motivating me: wanting new challenges.

Reti: Okay. That makes sense. And when you were dealing with some of this sort of underside of academia, would you get discouraged? I've certainly known faculty who've done this kind of chairing, or other kinds of service, who've ended up feeling like after three years, I think I don't really want to do all this stuff anymore, you know?

Blumenthal: So it would be depressing if one were doing Privilege and Tenure hearings for one's career. I think you'd get to a point where you'd seen enough of the seamy side of society.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: But in fact, I didn't find it that depressing. I mean, we all know in our lives that there are extreme personalities and no surprise that they would exist on the faculty as well. But I was really heartened by my colleagues on the committee. They were a good group of people; their heart was in the right place. You know, faculty can disagree about a lot of things, but I found that on Privilege and Tenure, we all tended to agree. We were just basically human beings who wanted to do the right thing. I found that very heartening. So for me it was, in many ways, an uplifting experience.

Reti: Oh, good. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So just talked about the issue of incompetence. That all happened during my first year on the committee. Then I was asked if I would chair the committee. I wasn't totally surprised, first, because Aimeé had reached out to me on these other things. And secondly, when I looked around the committee, who was on the committee, there was only one other person who I thought was competent enough to chair. He would have been fine with me. But it either had to be him or me. Later I was pleased that I got to interact with him when he was chair of the senate division at Berkeley. He was a good chair at Berkeley.

When I became the chair, the first thing I did was I threw out all the bylaw stuff we'd been doing and decided we needed to start again. The second thing I did is I brought in Carole Rossi to work with us, so that we would have our own lawyer at our side throughout the process. I also asked her to be liaison with OGC, so that if OGC had issues with what we were doing, that we'd know about it from the beginning.

The third thing I did was I made a decision that I would be the person who kept all of the drafts of the work that we were doing. The original and official drafts of everything resided on my computer at Santa Cruz; we didn't have Google Drive where you could share things. Somebody had to be the keeper of the draft. So I insisted on that, which was a challenge for me, I might add, because I used Linux, which is a form of UNIX. Most other people were using Microsoft Word or something like that, which I didn't even know how to use in those days. So ultimately what I did is I learned how to program in HTML 1.0. I wrote all the drafts in HTML 1.0. That way it was universal. Anyone could access it on the web. But it was useful for me. I learned something.

So in terms of the bylaws, what I did was I sat down and thought about them a lot before we even started. I kind of defined the agenda. Yes, we did a lot of work. But there were a few key things that I insisted or wanted from day one. First, there was only one preexisting bylaw that dealt with grievances, discipline, and early termination. It was all done in one bylaw. And the relevant paragraphs, like how you hold a hearing, they used the same paragraph for all three hearings. I also noticed that there were no clear standards of proof for hearings. They just told the committees to hold a hearing. They didn't tell how proven an issue needed to be. I thought that needed to be rectified as well. I used Carole as a sounding board to put those into place.

We were now in an age of the world-wide web. It was still relatively new in terms of its use. It struck me as silly to try to be economic with regard to space, or words. My thinking was that if you're the Privilege and Tenure Committee and you had a grievance hearing before you, you wanted a section on grievance, that dealt only with grievance. And if you had something on discipline, you wanted a section that dealt only with discipline. Even if a lot of the wording was the same, so what? Who cares? It doesn't cost much money to store stuff on a computer disk. So my theory was to take those three different kinds of

cases and separate them out into three different bylaws. And I added a fourth bylaw, which was sort of a bylaw over the top of them that explained the context of the three. I made the Privilege and Tenure part of the bylaws for the senate much longer, probably, much more than three times longer than it had been because we added a lot more stuff as well. So to me that was a major change, and I still believe, a very good one.

The second thing that I did is I insisted that there had to be standards of proof. For that, as I said, I used Carole as my source of research. But in fact, but I checked her. What we came up with was reasonable. For grievances, we state a standard of proof that was preponderance of the evidence. And for discipline and for early termination, we required clear and convincing evidence.

I might point out that occasionally that has become controversial, like in Title IX cases more recently. I would still maintain that the reasoning that led us there is still valid reasoning and it would be a horrible thing to carve out some particular crimes as having a different standard of proof than others. But that's what I think. It doesn't mean that's what the world will think. But anyway, what we did is still the law of the land in that regard.

Then we put in place a lot of explanation that we felt would be helpful for divisional committees. It really helped me that I had been involved in these hearings, because I saw what it was really like. So we put in a thing that requires hearings to have a record of the hearing. At Santa Cruz, we used a legal stenographer. But at one campus they used an old, broken-down tape recorder that didn't work half the time. So we put in place standards like that. We talked about the procedures in terms of a pre-hearing. We set the ground rules for a hearing to be more efficient. We put in lots and lots of stuff to walk the local

committee through the process. At the end of the day, we finished the bylaws. It took us a year, basically.

And then I had to go to two meetings of the Academic Assembly, which I was not a member of. The Academic Assembly is *the* body of the Academic Senate. It's *the* legislative body. And it is a total of sixty faculty members from all the campuses. The Academic Council is the executive committee of the Academic Assembly.

Reti: What's the difference between the Academic Senate and the Academic Assembly?

Blumenthal: Almost none. The Academic Assembly is the legislative arm of the Academic Senate. So if I were to say, "the senate decided," if I wanted to be really careful, I would say that only if the assembly had decided. The council does make many decisions, but they're acting as an executive committee only.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: But I had to go to these assembly meetings because I had to be there to answer questions on the legislation. And for me, it was a very interesting experience. I had to go twice because I think the standard was that we would have a discussion of an item once, and then the next time we'd enact it. So that was fun. I got to go to an assembly meeting. I got to sit and listen to all of the arguments on all of the issues. So it was a good learning experience for me. I was quite pleased with it.

There was one meeting where eligibility issues and senate, P&T by-laws were really the only two major issues on the assembly agenda. But I remember they did some stuff in the morning. Then after lunch these two issues were supposed to come up. I sat down where the Santa Cruz people were, rather than in the front of the room when they did eligibility issues. The woman who was the chair of BOARS [Board of Admissions in Relations with

Schools] said to me, “So why aren’t you sitting up here with me in the front?” I said, “Because I don’t want to be hit by any stray tomatoes.” (Reti laughs) Anyway, it was quite uncontroversial, at the end of the day. We did get some comments, but nothing too major.

But being in the process of successfully doing the bylaws, I thought it made sense for us to take on the bigger task of the faculty code of conduct. The faculty code of conduct lived in the APM. It was APM 015. But I took the viewpoint again that it doesn’t hurt to have more words if you could be clearer. So we divided it into APM 015 and 016, where 016 is about implementation of the code, and the code part is more about what you expect of faculty and what rights they have.

And to do that, now this is more complicated, because the senate bylaws are owned by the senate. So the senate can damn well do what it pleases. But the Academic Personnel Manual is officially owned by the president. It is a presidential document and the president can write what he wants in the APM. He does have an obligation to consult with the Academic Senate. But it’s a consultative role only, for the senate. However, traditionally, the senate’s voice has been an important part of determining the policy in the APM. And furthermore, at least in those days, the regents would never have approved changes in the Faculty Code of Conduct without senate concurrence.

Reti: Is this part of shared governance?

Blumenthal: Yes. I took the attitude that nobody on the administrative side was chomping at the bit to do anything here. I was offering to do it. Let me just stop for a second and add, I figured if I was going to chair a systemwide committee, I could sort of occupy the chair and just sort of be there, or I could actually *do* something. I wanted to *do* something. I wanted to leave feeling like this was time well spent. And I was really

pleased—it was clear that we were going to get the by-laws done. But I really wanted to have an impact. So that's why I took on the code of conduct as well.

So after some discussions with Academic Affairs at the Office of the President, we agreed that we'd put together a task force chaired by me with three representatives from the senate and three representatives from the administration. The three representatives from the senate were me, and my vice-chair Jody Holt, from San Diego. The third person I gave a lot of thought to. And I finally asked Michael Cowan from our campus to do that, knowing that Michael wouldn't be able to devote all that much time, that he wouldn't be necessarily a key participant because he was at that time chair of the systemwide senate. But I wanted him on there both to make sure that we were connected to the Academic Council, and because he, by virtue of his position, brought with him a certain gravitas. And on the administrative side, they had Carole Rossi. They had Sheila O'Rourke. Then the third person they appointed was Norm Abrams, who was then the vice chancellor, or associate vice chancellor for academic personnel at UCLA. Interestingly enough, he was later the acting chancellor at UCLA for a year. I got to know him much better then.

So this group of six started meeting. And again, I decided that the drafts would be on my computer. Am I a control freak, or am I a control freak? (Reti laughs) Anyway, so we started meeting. Part of what we had to do was to take the new bylaws and represent them accurately in the code of conduct. But we also realized soon that the code of conduct hadn't been changed for years and there was stuff that was way out of date. There was stuff that needed to be clarified and changed. There were a lot of things that we needed to do. Then in terms of new policy, there were some things we decided to add to it as well.

One that we added to it was a new discipline. Prior to that, there were four faculty disciplines: a letter of censure, a suspension without salary, a demotion or a dismissal

from the university. We added a fifth one, which was loss of emeritus status. That was important because emeriti faculty are members of the senate, and therefore can be disciplined. You can't suspend them; you can't fire them. They don't care if you write a letter of censure. And you can't demote them at that point. So they're immune from any discipline. That's why loss of emeritus status was important. Also, because if somebody's acting really badly, then you don't want them to have a right to be on campus. So we added another discipline.

The other thing which we came to grips with—and frankly I was really reluctant to at the time—but I was persuaded by Norm (Norm and I had some real disagreements), had to do with mandatory leave for faculty. I will say to you now that Norm was basically right in the arguments that we had. I wouldn't have admitted that at the time. I didn't believe that at the time, but I now believe that, maybe because I've gone over to the dark side of the university. But the issue was, might it be necessary to put people on mandatory leave with salary? And might it be necessary to put people on mandatory leave without salary prior to a hearing?

The issue of putting people on mandatory leave with salary seemed to me almost to be a no-brainer to me. There had to be some mechanism to keep people off campus if they posed a clear and present danger. The issue of whether or not it made sense to suspend a faculty member without salary, prior to a hearing, to me was a much bigger issue. Now I'm not suggesting that if you have salary that you're not damaged if you're suspended. Of course, you don't have access to your students, to the lab, to the library, etcetera. But if you don't have a salary, you're really in much more desperate straits.

Norm ultimately persuaded me that there were grounds for doing that. The example that he gave actually was a real example. It had to do with the obstetric clinic at UC Irvine.

There were three doctors at Irvine that had been doing in vitro fertilization, where they take an egg from a woman, fertilize the egg, and then put it back in the woman. Well, apparently these three doctors didn't bother to make any efforts to put the eggs back in the woman from whom they came.

Reti: Oh, my God.

Blumenthal: I kid you not. So there were a lot of women who gave birth and raised, or started raising, children who were not biologically their children. So you can imagine the lawsuits and the settlements. But it also led to Privilege and Tenure hearings on these three faculty members, one of whom, interestingly enough, stuck around and went through the hearing. Ultimately the hearing found him guilty, recommended something other than full dismissal. But the university decided to dismiss him, which probably was the only politically reasonable thing to do. The other two fled the country to Mexico, never to return because they also faced criminal charges. And so Norm's point was: why should we be paying a faculty member who's fled the country and isn't doing his job?

Reti: That's a pretty strong example.

Blumenthal: Yes. I thought it was a good argument. But I was really reluctant, so I insisted that if we do that, we need to put in place controls to ensure fairness. One of the controls I insisted on was that charges needed to be brought within fifteen days, formal charges, and that after the formal charges were brought, the faculty member in question could ask for an expedited hearing before Privilege and Tenure, as a grievance against having been suspended without salary.

I'll admit to you. I didn't think real hard about the criteria we put in place for suspensions with salary because I didn't regard that as nearly an extreme situation. I wanted something similar, but I didn't really think much about it. It did get written in an identical

way. So I'm going to just now admit to you that years later I became an advocate for changing that little piece. We had a case on campus where the issue came up whether or not we should file charges within fifteen days. And we realized that—and this was someone we put on leave with salary—but based upon the clear danger he posed to the campus were he to remain on campus. We weren't ready within fifteen days to file charges. We decided that we would do something real quick if we had to, but it was a real dilemma because we knew we wouldn't have the whole case ready to bring to charges in fifteen days, and we wouldn't have the completed investigation.

So our Campus Counsel came up with, I think, a brilliant solution, which was to approach his attorney and get the client to agree to waive the fifteen-day requirement for charges on the grounds that we really were going to do an investigation. The investigation might exonerate him and then it would save him a lot of trouble in terms of attorney's fees, etcetera. But if you make us do it in fifteen days, we'll do it in fifteen days, but then there's less chance of exoneration down the line. He agreed, and so in this case we got past it. But I realized this was untenable.

Reti: Fifteen days is very quick.

Blumenthal: So in fact, years later, when I was on the President's Task Force on Sexual Violence, Sexual Assault, for faculty, one of the major changes I proposed and actually wrote up, was a change to the faculty code of conduct to allow mandatory leaves to be longer. That was put into place and it was surprisingly uncontroversial. Almost nobody opposed it. But again, different times. But I'm admitting I was originally wrong.

Anyway, we got all of those things put in. We finished our draft of the bylaws. We put in lots and lots of other stuff, but I wouldn't even try to remember them all. But then we had to go get it approved and that was an experience to remember because not only did we

have to go to the administration and get them all to sign off out of OGC, but I had to get approval through the senate. And unlike the bylaw changes, which were just kind of smooth sailing, this was anything but, particularly on the Committee on Faculty Welfare. So as a part of the process, proposals like this go to the systemwide senate committees. They also go to the campuses. But they have to go to the systemwide committees. The committee that was most, besides obviously, UCP&T, that was most interested, was the Committee on Faculty Welfare.

I went there with Sheila O'Rourke to present these changes in the bylaws. I was completely unprepared for what I encountered. One of the faculty members, John Oakley, who was a law professor at Davis, was quite hostile to some of the changes that we proposed, which really surprised me, because I didn't think they would justify that level of hostility. Part of it, I think, was that he didn't like the way we wrote certain things. I've come to know John a lot better since then and even to regard him as a friend now. But he was very negative. And I wish like hell I could remember—he had a putdown for me and the proposal on that committee that was so elegantly done. I wish I could remember. (Reti laughs) He told a parable, which was really quite insulting in some ways but I thought it was hilarious to use it in that context. I just can't remember it anymore. But I remember he was relentless, so relentless, in fact, that that night, after I went home, I was utterly shocked to get a telephone call from the woman who was the chair of the Committee on Faculty Welfare, who I didn't know. She was a faculty member at Berkeley. She called me up at home to apologize on behalf of the committee.

Reti: So Faculty Welfare—what is their general purview?

Blumenthal: They do things like pension, health plans, retiree benefits. Faculty salaries. But they would have regarded discipline as being something that was within their purview

as well. I get that. It was approved finally by the assembly. I had to go back to the assembly. So again, quite interesting to do that. I then went to the regents. It was decided by somebody that I would go to this regents meeting. It was my first regents meeting. The regents had to approve the faculty code of conduct.

So I went to my first regents meeting. It was a stunning experience. First of all, M.R.C., who was then chancellor, found out I was going to go. She invited me to join her for both lunch and dinner. There's a regents lunch and a regents dinner. So I accepted. I thought it was really gracious of her to have me be her guest at dinner. I was very grateful.

I went to the meeting. And oh, my goodness, it was an experience to remember. First of all, it took a long time before they got to my item. They were dealing with the first discussion of comprehensive review. It was highly controversial. Comprehensive review of admissions applications. Prior to that, the campuses had been using objective criteria. UC Berkeley had started using comprehensive review, that is, reading the file and coming to a qualitative estimate of how good a student was. Now they still had to be eligible in those days based upon the objective test scores and grades. But if they met eligibility, the question of whether they should be admitted to Berkeley—Berkeley wanted to do this through comprehensive review. It was very controversial because of the danger that was felt by some of the regents that this was a way around SP1 and SP2. So there was a lot of discussion and debate.

John Moores was really active in that discussion. I was quite impressed by his questioning, though not by his position on the issue. One of the people who spoke to the committee was a guy from BOARS [Board of Admissions in Relations with Schools], who was a mathematician from Berkeley. I believe he was Cal Moore, who had served on BOARS for many years. John literally cross-examined him like a lawyer. I don't think

John was a lawyer. He was a business owner. He owned the San Diego Padres. But he really cross-examined Cal intensely.

The other thing I remember was I thought a lot of the regents said really stupid things at this meeting. (Reti laughs) But there was one guy who I thought was really smart, really asked good questions, really seemed to be on the ball. Turned out he was an alumni regent, Jeff Seymour.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: He was really good. Anyway, so I went to lunch with M.R.C. In those days, regent meetings were still at the Laurel Heights campus of UCSF.

Reti: All regents meetings. Because they had stopped rotating campuses by that period.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Well, they periodically pick it up again and stop again.

Reti: I know.

Blumenthal: But in those days, most of them were in Laurel Heights. I remember I almost lost M.R.C., which would have been a disaster, because this meeting was in the basement. There's this big meeting room. But the lunch was on the sixth floor. I would never have found it.

I had lunch and nice conversation with people. And at the end of lunch, just as I was walking out, the lieutenant governor walked in, who was Cruz Bustamante. Cruz Bustamante was a large man. I was kind of shocked. He sat down at a table and he took a large amount of food and just sat there to eat alone. I thought, how strange to sit and eat alone at a regents meeting. Everybody else was sitting at tables, carrying on conversations.

So anyway, that afternoon my item came up. It was relatively uncontroversial, except for Judy Hopkinson, who was one of the regents, and a very influential regent. Judy objected to the fact that there was nothing in there that made illegal romantic relationships between faculty and students.

I admitted there was nothing in there that did that. This issue's going to come up again a little later. I was aware at the time that maybe ten or fifteen years earlier, the issue had arisen within the university. I was aware of that somehow because whenever it came up, I had a conversation with Sandy Faber, who was at the time adamantly opposed to any such policy. I was surprised by the strength of her opposition, though I wasn't necessarily in favor of it, either, at that time. I also noticed that the then university-wide Committee on Privilege and Tenure adopted a resolution saying they were going to deal with it. But they never did. I had forgotten that by the time I became chair of that committee. It had to be fifteen years later that I became chair of the committee.

But Judy raised the issue and it was clear that this was something that we had not considered. And she said, "Okay, I'm all for approving this new code of conduct now. Would you consider another modification later?" So that was interesting, and as you'll see, I later became heavily involved in passing that modification. But this appearance was pretty much the end of my role on the university-wide Committee on Privilege & Tenure.

So by virtue of my three year tenure as the chair of the UCSC Privilege and Tenure Committee, I also served on the Senate Executive Committee. The first year I served on the committee, Helene Moglen was chair of the senate and Roger Anderson was the vice chair. Then for the next two years, Roger was the chair of the senate, and the vice chair was Carla Freccero.

It was an interesting experience for those three years. Helene was a very activist chair. That's who she was. She got involved in a lot of things. I always thought she was very fair in that role. I learned a lot from watching her and seeing how she ran things. She was a good mentor, in some sense. I don't think she was trying to mentor, per se, but she was a good mentor.

It was interesting to see their relationships with M.R.C. and John Simpson, who by then was the executive vice chancellor. I think Helene had a somewhat more rocky relationship with M.R.C. than Roger did. But again, I wasn't at the center of all of that chaos. Yes, I went to SEC meetings and yes, I went to meetings where the cabinet and the Senate Executive Committee met together, but there's only a few of them that I really remember as being that meaningful in those days. Partly that's because I think that Privilege and Tenure probably was irrelevant to SEC. We occupied kind of a strange corner of the university, a corner of bad behavior. It's not really a policy area, not the way educational policy, or planning and budget, or graduate education is. So in a way, I actually thought it was a mistake to have Privilege and Tenure on the executive committee. Somebody had made that decision years ago, years earlier, and that's what they did. I didn't object, certainly. But I didn't feel like I was in the center of the really key discussion issues that were going on at that time.

I do remember one of the first executive committee meetings with the chancellor. This was at the time when the TAs were organizing as to whether or not they would join a union. At the time, I was very, very supportive of the TAs forming a union. I was aware of the disparity of practices within the campus among different departments, in terms of how TAs were treated. The then-graduate dean was not somebody who I would have been happy working with if I was a TA, or working on behalf of TAs. I thought he was overly dictatorial. To me, it was pretty obvious that students were going to want union

representation, given the practicalities as well as the political views of our students. I just thought it was a done deal, that once they got the right to form the union, which they had fought for for many years, that when they took a vote, it was going to be a slam dunk. It was obvious to me.

Let me back up for a second. Some years earlier, there'd been a big fight about whether or not the Higher Education Act would pass, whether TAs could form a union because they didn't used to have that right. So they struck, and they picketed, and did all sorts of stuff around the system to get that right. I was pretty sympathetic to their position. And interestingly enough, in astronomy, a lot of our students were strongly in favor of getting that right as well. I remember as chair I kept saying to the students, "So are you saying something about us?" And they'd say, "No, no, this isn't about us. It's about our other departments." I think that they were sincere about that. And since most of my favorite students were out there on the picket lines, I had an intrinsic level of support for their effort.

Anyway, they got that right to form a union. Then there was going to be a vote about whether to actually do it. M.R.C. was determined that she would do everything in her power to keep that vote from being positive about the union. That's M.R.C. That's M.R.C. through and through. She'll fight any battle.

Reti: She was against there being a TA union.

Blumenthal: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

Reti: Do you know why?

Blumenthal: She's a member of the administration. Who wants to deal with a union? And I'm sure that was the systemwide position as well and she was loyally supporting it. But I think she believed it.

Anyway, the campus had put up a website of information for students so that they could be quote "better informed," on the issues related to the vote that was coming up. And the senate, at least members of the Senate Executive Committee, were objecting strongly to this website, feeling that it was more propaganda than it was factual. Frankly, just to be honest, going into that meeting I knew there were these discussions. I couldn't have cared less because, from my perspective, it was a done deal. They'd be represented by the union and I wasn't worried about the piddly details along the way.

Anyway, we had this meeting. It was at McHenry Library. It was maybe my first Senate Executive Committee meeting with the chancellor. And when they raised this issue, M.R.C. went on a tear. M.R.C. was going on one of her typical things where she was going, "No, no, no, you don't understand. We put up a website that contains factual information about the university and about employment at the university. We think that all of our TAs need to understand these issues. And that's what it is. It's a factual website that tells them all the things that they need to know in order to make an informed decision."

So while was M.R.C. talking—and M.R.C., of course, talked in a pretty loud voice (Reti laughs)—Sandy Chung, who's a faculty member in linguistics and was then the chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel—Sandy was sitting across from me at the table and she had a printout of this website that we were discussing.¹³⁴ She'd printed it out, which is kind of a weird thing to do today, but in those days, maybe not so much. Sandy's a very soft-spoken woman, but she started in a very soft voice just reading from the printout of the website. So you had this juxtaposition of M.R.C. going on and on in a loud

voice for the whole room about how these were just facts, and facts that our students should be aware of. And Sandy's reading this printout, which is clearly not just fact. Clearly, it's our position paper, our propaganda about this. And she does this in this very soft voice. I couldn't stand it. I cracked up. I thought it was the funniest thing I'd ever seen.

Reti: It's a very theatrical situation.

Blumenthal: I thought it was so— I couldn't help it.

Reti: Oh, no. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I think Sandy was doing it for effect, but I don't think she quite expected me to laugh as hard as I did. But I couldn't help it. It just seemed so funny to me, that they're both talking at the same time. So I started laughing. M.R.C. heard the interruption of my laughing. She looked around and she stared daggers at me for a minute. Then she said, "Do you think my position on this is wrong?"

I said, "Yes, I think you should reconsider your position on this."

She said, "Okay. I guess I will." (laughs)

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: It gave me a real respect for M.R.C. M.R.C. isn't an easy person to move from her path, but she's not crazy. I don't know why M.R.C. kind of took a liking, or gave me the respect that she always gave me, I really don't, because I didn't know her very well at the beginning. And to the extent that she knew me at all, I was a troublemaker trying to stay in Kerr Hall and keep her out of it. (Reti laughs) So I really don't know why M.R.C. showed me that level of respect, but she did. I've always appreciated that.

The other thing I need to say about certainly the last two years when Roger was chair was that they were chaotic years in the extreme. The senate meetings were painful during that period, in part because there were some controversial issues that people argued about. But a large part of it was because of a few characters who disrupted the meetings. I'm thinking in particular of one faculty member, Joel Yellin, who was a lawyer, and who loved to raise points of order and then argue with the chair when the point of order wasn't decided in his favor. We spent more time at senate meetings talking about process than we did talking about substance, it seemed sometimes. And then add to that that M.R.C. would come in. One of the great things about senate meetings, I used to think, was that the chancellor would come and give some remarks. But M.R.C. tended to go on and on and on and on. So one of the big items of discussion at executive committee meetings was how to limit M.R.C. so we could get on with our business. That was a real challenge throughout her time.

But basically, the senate was in chaos. The senate was in chaos because there were a few people who tended to satanize the senate office. Mary-Beth Harhen was by then the executive director of the senate, and I think she was doing a really excellent job. I knew her because she personally staffed the Privilege and Tenure Committee. So I worked with her directly but I think that was the only committee that she personally was the lead staff for. And she became the great Satan. People who didn't get what they wanted from the senate—there were a few who tended to satanize her, for reasons that I didn't understand. She was just carrying out policy and genuinely trying to empower the faculty senate.

One of the other officers of the senate who I knew quite well was Dave Koo, from astronomy.¹³⁵ Dave is the nicest guy, a sweet man and somehow he got caught in the middle of all of these fights because one of the things that people argued about were the minutes. We had long arguments about the minutes. And you know, throughout my life—

this is true of my senate service, this is true of my board service—I rarely even read the minutes, unless there’s a reason why I should read them. I don’t have the patience to go through and critically read and make corrections to minutes that I actually lived through. But it became a humongous issue on campus: the minutes, so much so that I think when I was senate chair we changed the rules on campus and we put in some nuance, like draft minutes. So you didn’t approve the minutes; you approved the draft minutes so that they became minutes. Then we also did senate action reports, so that after every senate meeting, they would send out from the office what actions took place. Because minutes have also the arguments and who spoke and whatever. What really is important is what were the actions taken. That can be more objective.

Anyway, all of that was going on. In fact, at a certain point during the year, somebody told me that Bookshop Santa Cruz sold out of *Robert’s Rules of Order*, which says something about the way the senate was operating.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was not a smooth-running organization.

Reti: Do most faculty come to the senate meetings?

Blumenthal: No. Most faculty don’t come to senate meetings.

Reti: Is this why, because of these sort of deadly discussions about minutes and things like that?

Blumenthal: I don’t know. There may be a bit of chicken and egg here. The only time I’ve ever seen most faculty at a senate meeting is when some very, very controversial issue’s being discussed.

Reti: Like the vote about the narrative evaluation system, or something like that.

Blumenthal: Right. In fact, when I became chair, one of the issues was the quorum. When I was on Rules and Jurisdiction, I'd been asked by the then-senate chair to write a legislation to lower the quorum for a senate meeting, which I did. So we lowered the quorum. Then we lowered it again, I think during Roger's term as chair. When I became chair, it was still a problem. So I finally decided to write legislation to lower it to fifty as the quorum. Fifty is, in fact, the quorum at Berkeley. So I figured if Berkeley could get by with fifty, we could get by with fifty. But there's dangers in that. Because if fifty of a certain type of faculty show up, it can really skew the direction of the senate. I would say today a typical senate meeting is seventy-five people. Maybe a hundred.

Reti: Out of how many faculty?

Blumenthal: Six hundred.

So I don't have a lot of specific memories of that time, except of a lot of senate chaos. I had liked it when Helene was chair. I don't think Roger was a bad chair at all. I think Roger was chair during the NES debate that we talked about earlier. He had to deal with that. And there were just so many bad feelings out there on both sides, or on all sides.

So the plan was that the vice chair of the senate, Carla Freccero would become chair.¹³⁶ I thought that would be really good. Carla is a no-nonsense person. I thought that would really be good. And then I got a call. I think the call was from Shelly Errington, who was then on the Committee on Committees.¹³⁷ She asked me if I would consider being, the next year, an officer of the senate. I thought about it and I said sure, I'm open to considering being an officer of the senate. I assumed that she meant either a parliamentarian, because I'd done all this rules stuff, or vice chair, because they'd probably want to balance Carla. You know: scientist, non-scientist. I didn't think much

more about it. I did talk to Carla. I talked to Carla because I was really supportive of her doing this. And she told me she had misgivings about taking this on. I really tried to convince her. I said I thought she would be good and I hoped she would do it.

Well, anyway, to make a long story short, at a certain point Carla made a decision that she did not want to become chair. That left them in a lurch. So they had to scrape the bottom of the barrel. So Shelly called me and asked me if I would agree to be chair of the senate. I said tentatively yes. I thought it would be interesting, challenging, but certainly interesting. But when I was in Oakland, I had been talking to both Michael Cowan (systemwide senate chair) and to Maria Bertero-Barceló who was the executive director of the systemwide senate, and I was aware that they had just done a study of compensation for senate chairs.¹³⁸ I think at the time Santa Cruz was really an outlier. All of the other senate chairs were getting like two course reliefs plus two months of summer salary. The chair at Santa Cruz was getting one course relief. That was just the way it was. First of all, I wanted to find out what the facts were from Maria, and I did. She was very generous in sharing that with me. Then I contacted Shelly and I said, "Look, Shelly, here's the deal. I'll do it. But I'll only do it if I'm compensated the way other senate chairs are. I don't want to sit in a room with a bunch of people on the Academic Council knowing that they're all valued by their campus more than I am."

She had no problem with that. But she said, "You're going to have to make it happen." Somehow I'd hoped she would make it happen. No, I'm just joking. So we agreed that we would go together to see [Executive Vice Chancellor] John Simpson and make that proposal.¹³⁹ And poor John Simpson, he was very happy when he heard that the senate had asked me to be chair. I told him what I just told you about compensation, which he would have to decide. He did the right thing. He said he would consider it and he would get back to me, which was of course the right thing to do. I, of course, didn't realize at the

time how inevitable his decision had to be. Thinking about it later, I realized what his dilemma was going to be. He was worried about if I didn't do it, they were going to go to Bob Meister. I think he would have paid me double. (laughter) In fact, what happened was, not only did he agree to it, but he said he wanted to give me summer salary the summer before I went on to senate chair so that I could take some time to learn the position. So he offered me more than I asked for.

So I agreed to do it. That's how I became senate chair.

Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood

The next section on [the interview outline] is M.R.C. Greenwood. So the first thing I would say is, M.R.C. was a force of nature. It was clear for anyone who worked with her. I already had huge admiration for her. She'd been at the White House as a science advisor. She was a woman who had strong opinions, but she had a commitment to excellence. She believed this campus could be better than it was, and she was determined that she was going to make it better than it was. And by God, she did. And that's a pretty good recommendation for somebody's success. So no matter what I say about her, good or bad, you have to look at it in that context.

But definitely a force of nature. When she walked into a room, you knew she was in that room. A very impressive person. I want to emphasize her raising the campus up to a higher level. She made us believers and I think she made the president a believer. If you compare the campus when she left to the campus when she arrived, not only was our ranking higher, but I think that the feeling on campus was just night and day. She made us believe. She made me a believer. I give her huge credits for that.

Reti: That's saying a lot, given that you'd been here a long time already.

Blumenthal: I know, absolutely. So I give her a lot of credit there.

She was funny. I mean, again, this was when I was chair of the senate. I remember one time we did graduation at the quarry, graduate graduation. The senate chair leads the procession, followed by the chancellor. The senate chair carries the staff, or whatever it is. So we started out where basically the Whole Earth Restaurant used to be, or basically where the Bay Tree Conference Center is now. The procession went all the way down to the quarry. This was my first graduation leading the pack, or doing this long procession. I still remember, I'm leading everyone down toward the quarry, and all of a sudden I hear behind me, "God damn it, George, slow down! Your legs are longer than mine."

Reti: (laughs) I can imagine. She's about five-one or two or something. There you are, what are you, like, six—

Blumenthal: I'm six-four.

After becoming senate chair, one of my first experiences with M.R.C. was on 9/11. That happened eleven days after I became senate chair. This was a fascinating experience. I had dropped off the kids at school. I was about to head into the office when I got a call from Kelly saying, "Come home. Right now." So I came home. There on the TV they were showing the two twin towers falling. We were shocked and horrified. As soon as the second one fell, you knew it was terrorism.

I called the schools, both my kids' schools, and asked whether or not classes were being cancelled and they were being sent home. They were surprised I was even asking the question. But I didn't know what people do in crises.

I decided I was going to stay home that day. Then I got a call from the chancellor's office saying that she wanted me there and that she was going to have an extended cabinet

meeting. She occasionally added the senate leadership to her cabinet for so-called extended cabinet. So we met to talk about what it meant for the campus because this was just before the beginning of the term. There were faculty caught in Europe who couldn't fly home. There were students who couldn't get here. There were parents who were worried about the safety of their students. We were dealing with all of those issues. It really gave me a great introduction to how well one could deal with issues. She really did a great job. She was on top of things. She led that discussion and dealt with issue after issue.

But I do remember that I was utterly taken aback and shocked because when they were discussing the plane that went down in Pennsylvania, M.R.C., who had been at the White House as a science advisor, basically said she believed that the air force had shot it down; they'd shot it down rather than let it crash into the Pentagon or something like that. The thought that our air force would shoot down a US plane, even if it was the right thing to do, it was such a shocking concept to me. I had a lot of trouble getting my arms around that concept. I was also struck that here I was struggling to get my arms around that concept and for M.R.C. it was sort of obvious. Well, in fact, we now know that that wasn't the case. But she believed it, or believed it could have been the case, and it didn't seem to cause her any problems thinking about it. Of course, she presumably thought through Lynda Goff was the vice-provost for undergraduate education. Lynda, I had known slightly. She was a biologist. She was a pretty damned good biologist. I think she had a very distinguished research career in biology. She had lots of graduate students that she graduated. So she worked well with students. She was a really good faculty member.

And then she became the vice provost of undergraduate education under M.R.C., and she interacted a lot with Senate committees. Those interactions were not always lacking in contention. Lynda also chaired the campus's WASC review for MRC. That review

consumed a *lot* of time, and ultimately it was completed under the guiding hand of Bill Ladusaw.

Anyway, I didn't mention Alison, so I should. When I agreed to be senate chair, they told me my vice chair was going to be Alison Galloway.¹⁴⁰ I was confused. I thought Alison Galloway was Susan Gillman, and Susan Gillman was Alison Galloway. I didn't quite have the names and faces correctly associated with them. Either would have been fine. But it turns out Alison was a great vice chair and I really, really appreciated her in that role. She and I became friends. We'd very frequently go out to lunch together just to talk about the issues that were before us. She was a great counterpoint, someone to bounce ideas off of. Sometimes she took on responsibilities that I thought she did a fantastic job in.

After I'd gotten my salary and course relief from John, I realized that I was able to get an O sticker as senate chair, because I had to be in lots and lots of places. But that wasn't extended to the vice chair. So I actually went to John and I said to him, "I really think you need to give the vice chair a summer salary, and you need to give the vice chair—" I said, "This may not be a general rule," because I know they had just set up new rules on O permits. But I said, "Alison is a single mother and she's doing this service. So I really want you to give her an O sticker." And he did. I felt really good about that because I felt really bad that she didn't have one. She was a single mom and her daughter, Gwyn, was still pretty little at that time. Sometimes Alison, if we went to lunch, she would bring Gwyn with her to the lunch, which I felt sorry for Gwyn about, because she had to listen to us talking about senate stuff. But Alison was a great vice chair, really, really good. I couldn't have asked for a better one throughout. She really went to bat.

Reti: When you said M.R.C. made you a believer in the campus, I wanted to know more of what you meant by that. What didn't you believe in before and what did she convince you of?

Blumenthal: That's a fair question. I was a member since I arrived at UCSC of what was generally regarded as by far and away the best department on campus. So I really did believe in excellence, and thought I knew something about excellence. On the other hand, when I looked around the campus, I didn't see a uniform commitment to excellence. I saw commitments in some places, but not in others. I was skeptical that the campus would ever try systematically to raise the campus up to a top-notch level across the board.

That's how I felt until M.R.C. got there. And M.R.C. was determined, by sheer force of personality and will, that we were damn well going to raise ourselves up to be at the top ranks. I saw that determination and I became a believer. She was damn well going to do it. She didn't care about anything else.

Reti: By the time she left, we had risen in the rankings, for sure.

Blumenthal: We'd risen a lot. And more importantly, even, people were now believers in excellence. The quality of the faculty that were hired under M.R.C., I think took a significant leap upwards. I give her a lot of credit for where we are today. I really do believe that.

So soon after I became chair, there was a regents meeting on campus. There was a regents visit. M.R.C. had the regents over to her university house for dinner. They shoved a lot of tables in there. There was only about a half dozen regents. I remember Judy Hopkinson was one of them because I sat next to her at dinner. And to my astonishment, prior to the dinner, M.R.C. asked me if I would give the after-dinner speech about the future academic course of the university. That was kind of unprecedented. I remember her vice chancellor

of research, Miller, said to me afterwards he'd never been at a university when any president would think of asking the chair of the senate to do something like that.

But I did give that speech, which I worked on very, very hard, and carefully. I really worked at it. (laughs) Although I remember—you'll find this one amusing—I didn't often wear jackets. So I got up to give the speech. Of course, I was nervous. I'm always nervous. I reached in my pocket and pulled out the speech and it was my son's bar mitzvah speech.

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs) That's very funny.

Blumenthal: So I made a little joke of it and said, "Oh, wrong speech. That's my son's bar mitzvah speech. You don't want to hear that." Then I reached in my other pocket and pulled out the right speech and gave the speech. Afterwards, interestingly enough, some little old lady, I don't know who it was, came up to me and said, "I actually would have liked to have heard your son's bar mitzvah speech." (laughter)

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: But anyway, M.R.C. had me do it. I gave the speech. I was really nervous. I remember sitting down and I remember Judy Hopkinson saying, "That was a really nice speech." I really appreciated that coming from her because she's a pretty tough woman. So I really give M.R.C. credit. That's why I have a lot of loyalty to M.R.C. and why I really think that she really did a lot for me personally.

Reti: All right, so today is December 12, 2018. This is Irene Reti. I'm here for my fourteenth oral history with George Blumenthal. We're going to continue talking about senate service of various kinds, M.R.C. Greenwood.

Blumenthal: And a lot of the stuff between senate chair, local senate chair, and M.R.C. are mixed up, so I kind of smooshed them together. But one of the interesting experiences

I had with M.R.C. had to do with a labor dispute. There was a strike. I don't remember who was striking. It was probably AFSCME. That's a good guess for any random strike. But we all knew the strike was coming. When the strike came, a lot of people walked the picket lines on campus. During the day of the strike, I was at the Office of the President for some reason, I don't remember why. But I do remember that somehow I got a call from M.R.C.'s office saying that she was having an extended cabinet meeting and she wanted me there. Of course, I couldn't go, because I was at the Office of the President. But I agreed to call in. So I called in to the cabinet meeting. The cabinet meeting was about the strike. It was about the number of staff and faculty who had gone out and walked the picket lines. Apparently with staff, there's a well-defined mechanism to determine who's been on the picket lines and hasn't done their job that day, and therefore shouldn't be paid for the day. But for faculty, it's a much more ambiguous question because faculty don't punch a clock, faculty don't submit timesheets, and faculty have the freedom to do whatever they damn well please on their own time. And so, the question she was asking was, how many faculty canceled their classes because of the strike? And if so, she was determined, she said, to dock their pay.

So what ensued was this kind of surreal discussion between M.R.C. and me. I was on the phone. Usually when I'm on the phone I tend to be very passive. But I basically said, "M.R.C., you can't do that. You can't just arbitrarily decide that if the class is canceled that you know the reason, and that it's justifiable to dock a faculty member's pay. A faculty does many things as part of their job. They do research. They do service. Sometimes faculty miss classes to go to a meeting, or to do something else. You can't just make an assumption and start docking people's pay left and right." M.R.C. was in one of her moods. She was really upset about the strike. And she's going on and on. I said, "M.R.C., this will

lead to no good. People will file grievances. The faculty will rally around anyone that you choose to dock the pay of.”

Then the person who came to speak was Beau Willis. Beau Willis was the chief of staff to John Simpson. And it turns out that when that discussion had started, Beau left the room and went back to the EVC’s office to look up what had happened the last time there’d been a strike, or the previous times there’d been a strike. He came back and he said, “Well, I’ve got the records from the last two strikes.” He said, “Two strikes ago, we didn’t do anything with faculty except make threats. And nothing happened. And then last time we did dock the pay of two faculty members. They both grieved to the Committee on Privilege and Tenure. And we withdrew, I mean we essentially,” he didn’t use these words, but basically he said, we caved.

Reti: So they’d been around on that one before.

Blumenthal: He said, “That’s the precedent.” I was really grateful that Beau had gone and done that. So then M.R.C. backed away and said, “All right, I guess we’ll have to let this go.” And the discussion kind of ended. It was really kind of funny. I thought about it afterwards. And I wondered whether—I mean, there were two possibilities. One possibility was that M.R.C. was really determined nobody was going to get away with anything. If you canceled your class, you were going to get docked your pay. And she was just not to be denied. The other possibility was that she really wanted to show how tough she was to her cabinet, so she was taking this stand. She wanted me on the call because she knew I would oppose this and argue with her. She wanted that clash so that she might have an excuse at the end of the day to back away. And I, to this day, don’t know which of those two explanations is correct.

Reti: Interesting. She’s a highly political animal.

Blumenthal: Yeah, she is a very highly political animal, but she's also somebody who sometimes reacts strongly to things, so I can see her reacting emotionally to it. I don't know which one of those it was, but I thought it was very interesting and an instructive experience. I hadn't actually wanted to call into that meeting. I did it only because her office insisted that I really had to.

Reti: Now I don't know if you were planning to talk about this at some other point, but in terms of her approach to demonstrations at the time, how would you describe that? I realize you weren't in the administration at that time.

Blumenthal: So that's a harder question for me: her approach to the demonstrations. In those days, as chair of the senate, I stayed out of the demonstration stuff. I can say this, though. When I was chair of the senate, I did start to meet with the head of the Student Union Assembly for those two years. I can tell you now, from my looking back on history, that the leadership of SUA has been really varied: sometimes very activist and difficult to deal with; sometimes very cooperative and good leadership; sometimes out to lunch. And when I was chair of the senate, the leadership of the SUA was pretty out to lunch, in terms of being effective. They wanted to be effective, but I think that M.R.C.'s general attitude toward students was that she really wanted Francisco Hernandez to handle students. I think one of the reasons she deferred to Francisco so much, which she did a lot in those days, to me to a somewhat surprising extent—I think part of the reason was that she viewed him as the buffer. He took care of the student issues so she didn't have to worry about them. It was kind of apparent. Francisco was a very controlling guy and the students in the student government just had no idea how to deal with him. So I had a lot of fun talking to them and trying to tell them that they had to be persistent, that they had more power than they thought. I was kind of surprised at how, at least for those two years, at how unassertive student leadership was, at least in the student government.

Reti: So when you say “controlling,” do you mean controlling access to the chancellor?

Blumenthal: It was access to the chancellor; it was agreement to do things that the students wanted to have happen. They had trouble moving the needle on any of a number of issues, some of which would have been really simple to do. I was just surprised at how they kept getting no’s and how they took it. The students we have today, they would have beaten that to a pulp. So I did actually work with the students and try to give them some pressure points that they could use to accomplish some things.

The other thing that I did, which I think was actually very big for the students, was that prior to my being chair of the senate, the students did have representation on many senate committees, particularly key senate committees like Committee on Educational Policy and the Graduate Council and the Committee on Planning and Budget, for example. So there was student representation, but the student representation came from something that I kind of regarded as a prehensile tail. There was some council of college governments. Each college has a government, and there was a council of college governments. But there was also the SUA, which existed independently of this council of college governments. Everyone recognized by that point that the SUA was the group that spoke for students for the campus. But it was the council of college governments that made appointments to Academic Senate committees. And so far as I could tell, they didn’t do a good job of making appointments, because a lot of their appointees never showed up and never got back to students. Secondly, it seemed to me that if there’s a student government with an interest in policy on the campus, shouldn’t the policy liaisons to the senate from that student government be appointed by the student government?

Reti: (laughs) Yeah, absolutely.

Blumenthal: So I made the relatively arbitrary decision, which I had complete authority to do, apparently, (or at least nobody challenged me on it), that henceforth I just issued by decree—I had no idea that I had the power to do this or not—that from now on, all senate committee, students on senate committees, would be appointed by the SUA. It's been that way ever since. I think it's a much better system. But I made that change kind of in a vacuum. Nobody else was telling me I couldn't do it. Nobody complained. So I just did it. It was one of those fun things to do. I almost certainly didn't have the authority to make that change. But again, I just did it. And it was a good thing to do, I think.

Reti: These are things that are in my mind because I've been working on a chapter on the Greenwood era [for the UCSC history anthology *Seeds of Something Different*]. The whole notion of a graduate college—did that ever go anywhere? I know Greenwood was very interested in seeing that happen.

Blumenthal: (laughs) So that idea was floated around. It may have started during M.R.C.'s time. It may have even started earlier. But I think M.R.C. was a supporter of it, and I was a very strong supporter of it. Frankly, at some level, I still am. The idea was that since we are arranged in a collegiate structure, since a lot of our housing is based in colleges, that there would be a justification for a graduate college. The graduate college would have places for students to live, just like an undergraduate college. It would have activities, social activities. It would also have activities associated with career development because a lot of graduate students in those days, and much more so today, wanted to learn more about how to start a business. What are the alternative careers after I get my degree? How do I thrive in the real world? There are lots of questions that graduate students are really interested in that are not a part of our regular curriculum. And the idea was if we had a graduate college, that graduate college could offer those kinds of courses or information in whatever form it could be. I thought it was a really great idea.

I was a strong proponent of it. And I think for a long time, I think the Graduate Council supported it. I don't recall whether the graduate dean was all that supportive. I'm trying to remember. I think, was Frank Talamantes the dean at that time? I don't remember what his position was on it. I don't remember hearing a lot from the graduate division itself on the issue.

When I talked to them, the impression I got was well, this might be a good idea, but it's impractical because we're not building another new college. My comeback to that was fine, make it a virtual college. There's no reason it had to be a physical college, at least, at first. You could make it a virtual college. Just create it out of thin air; appoint a provost; offer some of the courses or information sessions on career development, and do it through the college, and have the graduate dean be the provost of the college. It wouldn't really cost all that much, but there would be a structure there. And if we ever could build the damn college, then we'd have the structure in place, the administrative structure.

I thought it was a good idea, but it never went anywhere. I think the reason it never went anywhere was that it never had a champion. It really needed somebody to be a champion. I know I raised the issue of graduate college when I came in as acting chancellor. At the time, Lisa Sloan was graduate dean. She's from earth sciences, does climate change. And she didn't seem real enthusiastic. It just needed somebody to take that on. It really needed the graduate dean's leadership. She wasn't wild about it. I think Tyrus Miller was more open to it, but Tyrus, when he came in, had far more fish to fry. He had a lot of other things that he needed to do that were more immediate. He would argue that they were already doing some of the things that you would associate with the graduate college, so who cares, which was not an unreasonable position to take by that point. But I thought it was a great idea, and I know M.R.C. was a supporter of the idea. I think with the right dean in place, it could have happened. But it needed a champion. It couldn't just be the

chancellor. It couldn't just be M.R.C. or me. It couldn't just be the senate chair. It had to be somebody like the graduate dean who would take this on and say, "I'm going to make this happen."

Reti: Okay. Thank you. That's really helpful.

Blumenthal: So Irene, please feel free to raise issues like this.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: Because I think neither of those made my list.

Reti: Okay, great.

Blumenthal: Okay. So when I became chair of the senate, the Committee on Committees appointed Bob Meister to be chair of the Committee on Planning and Budget, which it turns out he did for the next three years: he chaired that committee.¹⁴¹ I knew a couple of things. I already talked about the Meister report and the issues there. I knew that he was not well loved within the administration. I suspected that one of the reasons he was appointed to be chair of that committee was that—it was probably seen as in some ways an offset to me, balance.

But I also knew that M.R.C. hated him. And the reason M.R.C. hated him was—and this had to have happened just before I became chair. One of the big controversies on campus had to do with space, and the extent to which the campus was built up academically, in other words, classrooms, laboratories and offices. At the time, the California Postsecondary Education Commission still existed and they had a formula for allocating space to campuses. I point that out because their formula wasn't a UC thing; it was an objective, third-party formula. And based upon that formula, the UC system at that time was about 95 percent built to what they were supposed to get based on the formula. If you

looked at Berkeley, Berkeley was at like 105 percent of state-funded building. If you looked at Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz was 69 percent built up at the time. 69 percent. And I'll even tell you, sometime later—I'm going to come back to the main point—but sometime later, this was after I became chair, I remember that Larry Hershman¹⁴² was then the vice president of budget and another vice president-type person from the Office of the President, I don't remember which one, came down to the campus. I had lunch with them and Meredith Michaels. When Meredith went to the restroom, I mentioned this 69 percent number and neither of them believed me. They said that can't possibly be true. I said it absolutely is true. They said it can't possibly be true. Then Meredith came back from the restroom and so I said, "Ask Meredith." And Meredith confirmed that that number was absolutely correct.

Reti: Is there any reason for that? That's probably a very complicated question. But why did we end up so underfunded?

Blumenthal: Part of it was that our enrollment had grown so fast that building hadn't kept up with it. Part of it was that there's only so much building money in the system, and Santa Cruz may not have been getting our fair share. But whatever the reason may be, this rose up as an issue just a few months before I became chair, maybe in the spring or something. I don't remember the exact timeframe, but it was fairly late in Roger Anderson's term as chair.

It had been sort of discussed. And then one day we had a senate meeting. It was a very notable senate meeting. It was very packed. At the senate meeting, M.R.C. got up and gave her remarks. And—(laughs) Like M.R.C. frequently did in those days, her remarks went on for a really long time, like a half hour or 45 minutes I was sitting in the audience kind of like halfway back. I was listening but I honest to God, I wasn't listening that hard. And

later on, when I talked to Sandy Faber—Sandy Faber was very close to M.R.C. at that time, and so, Sandy had talked to M.R.C. about this before the meeting, although I didn't know that. After the meeting, I happened to run into Sandy, and Sandy said, "Well, what did you think of M.R.C.'s great announcement?" I had missed M.R.C.'s great announcement. Her great announcement was that she had talked to Dick Atkinson and Atkinson had agreed that he would do everything in his power to raise Santa Cruz up to 80 percent of the CPEC. That was her great announcement.

Later on in the meeting, Bob Meister—he may not have been chair of CPB, but he gave the report for CPB. I think the chair wasn't there—Bob gave his little speech and it included a section on space. He quoted the 69 percent number and then he basically said, the reason this is so low is because our chancellor has been—I can't remember the words. But he used a metaphor. And the metaphor was that the chancellor was acting to the president much like a dog would when the dog lies on its back and gives its tummy to his owner to be rubbed. That was the metaphor he was using to describe M.R.C.

Reti: Oh, no.

Blumenthal: You can just imagine how M.R.C. felt about that. When I heard that, I mean, I laughed, because it was so ridiculous. M.R.C. is many things, but that is not what she is, right?

Reti: She is not submissive.

Blumenthal: But oh, man, I later found out from Sandy, who had been talking to M.R.C. afterwards as well, that that comment hurt her deeply. Literally for a week or two, she just couldn't stop talking about that. It really got under her skin. I actually get it. Sometimes people who are a little more blustery, as M.R.C. sometimes was, are actually in some ways more sensitive. You wouldn't think it from their public persona, but it doesn't surprise

me. M.R.C. did tell me on another occasion divorced from this, that there was only one person on campus that she hated, and it was Bob Meister. (laughs) So anyway, that was—I'm not sure what your question was—but that was the space issue that had come up. And that's what her feelings were on Meister.

So Meister became the chair of CPB. I felt that during his first year of chair, he did a pretty darn good job. I would have graded him a B or a B plus. As chair of the senate, I sat *ex officio* on CPB, as did Alison [Galloway]. Alison was more invested in CPB, because she had been a member of CPB before she became vice chair. So she was more into the CPB stuff than I was, but I attended all of the meetings dutifully. Eight o'clock in the morning on Thursdays.

I think overall, Bob did a good job. One of the things that he did, and I really thought it was very, very good, is he invited Meredith to participate in all of the CPB meetings. There were occasionally executive sessions. But basically, he wanted Meredith there to give her interpretation and to provide translation for some of this stuff that we were hearing about. I thought that that was very enlightened of him. I honestly believe that that first year he did a very good job. And I'll stand by that.

However, the second year was another matter. The year did not start out well. Our first meeting of CPB, we were trying to put the finishing touches on the committee's report to the senate, which Bob drafted. (laughs) The report he wrote was horrendous. Two things. One is, and this was something Bob did a lot—Bob is one of these guys who's so smart, he could give you a logical argument and you'll follow his logic along, walking step by step along a pathway. But then, all of a sudden, he'll make a leap, like he'll leap over a river or something, without any discussion. He'll just jump over to the other bank of the river, and start walking further out, logically, step by step. And you'll stop him and say, "Wait a

minute. What about that river there?” And often you can’t get a clear answer to that river question. And so, I sometimes found it very frustrating to follow his logic. It was very beautiful at times, but then with these chasms in logic that just didn’t make sense to me. Anyway, there was that in the report.

But there were also a couple of places where he talked very matter-of-factly about the many times that John Simpson lied to the committee. (laughs) And I felt like, we hadn’t even discussed anything like that, much less wanting to put it into a report. So I objected quite strenuously to including that language in the report. (laughter) And it was one of those things. Here you’ve got the chair of the committee arguing strongly one way, the chair of the senate arguing the other way. The rest of the committee was kind of caught in between us. But I was determined that I would bring it to a vote before we issued any report like that. Because, first of all, I didn’t think it was true. But even if it was true, you still have to work with people. Furthermore, I didn’t think it was true. I don’t think Simpson was a liar. In fact, I’m sure he wasn’t. I think John tried to do the very best he could.

And so, it was really awkward that year. Throughout the year, Bob and I clashed a lot on the committee. So here we were—we had been friends, and then we had worked well together for a year, and then we had this—and it got so bad—(laughs)—it got so bad, I kind of forgot about this, that Sandy Faber, who was then the chair on Committee on Committees, and Helene Moglen, who had been a previous chair of the senate, decided to have a dinner for the two of them plus Bob and me, with the idea that this would be a great opportunity for the four of us to have a conversation and come to some reasonable accommodations on a range of issues. So Helene cooked dinner at her house and Sandy and Bob and I came over.

Reti: (laughs) She's a brave woman.¹⁴³

Blumenthal: Well, I think Helene was quite close to Bob and Sandy's quite close to me. Anyway, we had this dinner. I remember I tried very, very hard to be accommodating. Bob did not try hard to be accommodating. He was unmovable in his positions and it basically accomplished nothing. I remember the next day or the day after, I saw Sandy. I said, "Well, what did you think of this dinner?" Her answer was very diplomatic. She said, "Helene and I talked about it afterwards and we both decided that you were trying very hard to be a mature adult." (laughter)

Anyway, at the end of my term as chair of the senate, when the LRDP was getting going, and I'll come back to the LRDP later. But while I think of it, I'll stick in this little piece. M.R.C. had agreed to form a couple of initial committees on the LRDP, one of which was going to be chaired by Tom Vani, the vice chancellor for business and administration. And at one of her extended cabinet meetings, as we were discussing this, she asked me if I would be on the committee, and I agreed. And then I said that I thought Bob Meister should be on this committee. M.R.C. reaction was, "You've got to be kidding me."

Reti: Because he was the chair of the Planning and Budget Committee?

Blumenthal: Exactly. And also, I just felt like sometimes you're better off bringing somebody into the tent. Inside the tent, he might be actually helpful, but outside the tent, he would be deadly. First Tom said, "That would be fine. I could work with him." Then M.R.C. said, "Absolutely not." She adamantly refused. I think Tom went and talked to her after the meeting because either she or Tom came to me later and said, "We've changed our minds and we're going to put Meister on the committee. But our expectation is that every meeting that he attends, you will attend." (laughter)

I said fine. Sure enough, I did attend all of those meetings. Bob was a very good citizen. He was actually a very positive influence on the group. So it was a plus. So I'll take an I-told-you-so on that one, that it was a good choice.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: (sighs) Interesting people we live with.

Reti: Yeah. There are the characters.

Unionizing UC Santa Cruz Faculty

Blumenthal: So, what next? Oh, this was a fun one. One of the other issues that came up that year had to do with labor unions, in particular, the faculty association. So let me back up a little bit. Back in the probably early '80s, the state of California passed a law called the Higher Education Reform Act.

Reti: HERA, yes.

Blumenthal: HERA. And in that act, it allowed university employees in general, and in particular, faculty members to form a union.

Reti: Oh, that's when we became unionized here.

Blumenthal: Maybe the CSUs were already unionized, I don't know. But they certainly became union all the way. But a vote was taken at every UC campus as to whether or not the faculty wanted to be unionized. I remember this very well, because we were given three choices on the campus: no union, or a faculty association, or join the Teamsters or something like that. I was a fairly young faculty member. There was no way I was going to join the Teamsters. On the other hand—

Reti: Because it was too blue collar?

Blumenthal: Yeah. It just didn't sound right. I mean, I didn't want to be in bed with Jimmy Hoffa, you know? (Reti laughs) So, I voted for the faculty association. The reason I voted for the faculty association—there was only one reason. It was Jerry Brown. Jerry Brown 1.0 was then the governor and he had just made his comment about how faculty don't deserve higher salaries because faculty get the psychic rewards of being a faculty member. That really pissed me off. (Reti laughs) And so it seemed to me, we were not going to get increases in salary unless we were able to organize and do something. My hope was that all of the campuses would unionize, and that would give us some collective power in order to increase faculty salaries.

Well, as it turned out, only one campus voted to unionize. It was Santa Cruz.

Reti: Really?!

Blumenthal: None of the other campuses voted that way.

Reti: Now you're talking specifically faculty, not staff.

Blumenthal: Faculty. Yes. And specifically senate faculty. Only one campus voted to unionize. It was Santa Cruz. It wasn't even a close vote at Santa Cruz. So a union was formed and the leadership of the union included Bob Meister, who was one of the major organizers of the local union. By the time I became senate chair, Bob had become the president of the systemwide union. There was a union systemwide, but they only had bargaining rights on one campus: Santa Cruz. So he was the head of the systemwide union.

Reti: Wait. So the original vote to unionize took place when?

Blumenthal: The early '80s.

Reti: Early '80s. And by the time you became senate chair—

Blumenthal: 2001.

Reti: We're talking about fifteen years later, there still had not been another campus that had unionized.

Blumenthal: That's right. And there still hasn't been.

Reti: Wow. This is very interesting. Okay. I had no idea.

Blumenthal: And you cannot imagine the looks I got from my fellow chancellors when I mentioned to them that I had voted to unionize back in the day. (laughter) They looked at me like I was nuts.

Anyway, Santa Cruz voted to establish a union. I never joined the union, although frankly at times I considered joining it. The deal is, you didn't have to join the union, to pay dues, but you could. Roughly on this campus, 25 percent of the campus faculty are dues-paying members of the union and they're very effective at recruiting. The way they would recruit faculty is they would offer them a position on their board. (laughter)

Reti: On their union board?

Blumenthal: Yeah. So anyway, and there have been periods when the faculty union here has been very inactive, but there's been periods when it's been very active. When I became chair of the senate, Bob had become the president of the systemwide union. There was only one campus, Santa Cruz, where the union had the authority to negotiate terms and conditions of employment. They couldn't negotiate salary, because salary is determined systemwide, but they could determine local terms and conditions of employment.

Reti: Wait, can I ask you one more follow-up question about this? So how do you account for the fact that Santa Cruz voted for the union and no other campus did?

Blumenthal: I've always assumed it was politics, that the campus is more liberal, more social justice-oriented, more union-oriented, than any of the other campuses.

Reti: But if you look at a place like Berkeley, there's certainly a long tradition of social activism.

Blumenthal: Yes, but Berkeley also had a huge engineering school. We didn't have an engineering school. Berkeley has a law school. We don't have one. There're extra faculty there that would be very unlikely to vote for unionization.

Reti: All right.

Chair of the UCSC Academic Senate

Blumenthal: So anyway, by the time I became chair of the senate, Bob was the president of the systemwide union, and Shelly Errington was the president of the local faculty association. And so, a couple of issues came up. First, I was approached almost immediately after I became senate chair by Shelly to work closely with the union on a variety of issues. And that caused me to actually go read—and I think at one time I had virtually memorized the Higher Education Reform Act (Reti laughs)—because I wanted to make sure exactly what was kosher and what wasn't, and who had what authorities. The act is pretty clear about what's within the purview of the Academic Senate is not within the purview of the union, but that there are items that are within the authority of the administration which both the union might be able to negotiate on, and that the senate could provide input on.

So I think, from my perspective, the law was relatively clear, but there were fuzzy boundaries. And as chair of the senate I was certainly happy to interact with the union. And in fact, Alison, was a union member, by the way, prior to becoming vice chair of the senate—Alison and I talked about it. We talked about whether I should join the union or whether she should quit the union. We decided that the right thing to do was just stay where we were.

But we did agree to meet with the union. So we met with them occasionally to exchange information. I was very careful not to exchange confidential information. And I was also very careful to never delegate to them authority that naturally resides within the senate. I viewed it as my responsibility to keep the senate prerogatives intact. There were some efforts to push that boundary a little bit, but relationships were generally friendly, but not loving, if you know what I mean.

One issue that had come up with the union and the administration here, prior to my being chair, had to do with parking. The campus had raised parking fees kind of regularly. But since the fees that faculty pay for parking is a local term and condition of employment, there was an understanding, or a ruling by somebody that that was something that must be negotiated with the union. So when the parking fees were raised (and apparently there was a big raise at one point), the union screamed bloody murder, and basically said, you can't do that without an agreement from us. So the campus was forced to roll back the parking fees to the previous level for faculty. That led to a rather interesting situation where members of the staff were paying significantly higher parking fees than were members of the faculty, which, as you might imagine, caused a little bit of unhappiness in various quarters. Probably the most unhappy person was M.R.C., who was just frustrated as could be that her hand was forced in this way.

I will tell you that while this was going on and I was on the Senate Executive Committee, I stayed as far away from this issue as I could possibly stay. It continued to simmer. It continued to get worse and worse. I, of course, encouraged the union and the administration to negotiate and come to an agreement, which I thought would be a good thing. But I didn't have a role in it.

In terms of parking, the first time I encountered this issue as chair was right after I became chair, M.R.C. held one of the staff advisory brown bag lunches. This was held in the lecture hall at Earth and Marine Sciences, this one. And it was packed. It was really packed. Since I was trying to learn more about the campus, I thought I would kind of come in the back and stand. It was standing room only. I was in the back, just standing there, listening to try to learn some stuff. M.R.C. was in the front. She gave her spiel. And then she was answering questions. And surprise, surprise, one of the questions was about parking, and about the fact that staff had to pay higher parking rates than did faculty. M.R.C. went on a tear. She said, "That is so unfair. I guarantee you, I am not going to let that continue. And I'm going to not only make sure that the faculty pay for their parking, I'm going to make sure they pay retroactively for parking." She's going on and on like that. I start to squat down because I don't want anyone to see me. (Reti laughs) Because the last thing I wanted somebody to say was, "Wait a minute, we see the chair of the senate standing back there. I wonder what he thinks about this."

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs) Try to hide your six foot-four frame.

Blumenthal: (laughs) Exactly. I was trying to hide my six-foot-four frame. Fortunately, nobody did that. But I knew a lot of the staff in that room, so somebody could have very well have done that. Anyway, ultimately it did get resolved. It took a long time. And I do remember that at one point M.R.C. wrote a letter to the campus about parking. I think

she very wisely—and she did this occasionally and I give her a lot of credit for it—she very wisely sent me the letter and said, “Would you read this letter and give me your feedback?” I did. In some cases, I think I prevented her from really throwing oil on a few fires. There are some issues of sensitivity. There’s no reason to poke them, if you know what I mean. As chancellor, I’ve been guilty of poking a few sensitive issues myself.

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: It happens.

Reti: It’s inevitable.

Blumenthal: But I think I actually did help resolve a few things. Ultimately, the parking issue got settled, and I had almost nothing to do with it.

But there was another issue then that arose and that issue was very interesting. It had to do with housing. The campus bought a bunch of apartments and condominiums just below campus on the other side of High Street, at High and Bay. M.R.C.’s plan was to use it as faculty housing. I think it was a brilliant purchase. I think it was a great idea. I was completely supportive of it, as I think most faculty were. But there developed a problem, and that problem came from the Office of the President, which pointed out that since the campus had floated loans to buy this property, etcetera, that we had to have an agreement with the union in terms of the rents that would be charged because this is a term and condition of employment. So there had to be a union agreement. We learned this shortly after the sale and it was, again, at one of M.R.C.’s extended cabinet meetings. Maybe she invited me there for this purpose, I don’t remember. But I was at this meeting and she turned to me (laughs) and she said, “I expect you to keep us out of trouble on this one and make sure we get to a deal.”

I said, “M.R.C., I have no role in getting us to a deal. I have nothing to do with labor. I have nothing to do with labor negotiations. But I will say this. I think it’s important that you negotiate in good faith with the union.” I said, “I know that Shelly Errington is currently on sabbatical at Berkeley, but she would be the ideal person to be negotiating with and that I was prepared to go to the union and ask them, or ask Shelly if she would return to campus for negotiations on this issue. But in exchange, what I’d like you to do is ask Tom Vani to take the lead in negotiations.”

She said, “No, I won’t do that.” She said, “We have labor relations folks that will do this and those are the people who have to do it.”

Now, the reason I made that request was because Bob Meister had once shared with me some emails that he had exchanged with people who were then in labor relations. And I have to tell you, I was shocked at how disrespectful the emails to him from labor relations were. I just found it shocking. It costs so little to be respectful to one another and yet they were snarky and nasty. They were the same kind of emails they might send to an AFSCME union leader, not that there’s anything wrong with being an AFSCME union leader, but I would expect a member of the faculty who’s leading a faculty union to garner a certain level of respect, and that was not there.

So I was very much afraid of what would happen if the labor relations folks at UCSC were involved in being the lead on this negotiation, even though that was their role. So I really argued with M.R.C. that Tom was the guy to do it. She was adamant. I think the first negotiating session, they did it that way. But then after that, Tom actually came in and was the lead negotiator. It made all the difference in the world. They got to an agreement and I was very happy. I had no role in it. I didn’t know anything about the terms. I didn’t care about the terms. I said from the get-go, “If you guys can agree, I will be between you

two.” So I was very happy. And I stayed happy until one day I was actually—I remember this very vividly, because I was in San Francisco with Kelly and we were at Hastings, and she was teaching. I was in her office working while she was teaching, minding my own business. And M.R.C. called me. I must have had a cell phone with me. M.R.C. literally called me and said, “We have a problem.”

I said, “What’s the problem?”

She said, “Before we signed an agreement on these condominiums, the negotiations broke down and we’re not in agreement anymore.”

I said, “That’s horrible, M.R.C.! We’ve got to get to an agreement.”

She said, “I’m really mad.” She said, “This is terrible. I need your help.”

I said, “I’m not a negotiator. I don’t have any role here.”

She said, “I really need your help to get this done. George, if we don’t get this done, if we don’t get this deal made with the union, I’m going to buy those apartment buildings, but I’m going to designate them as graduate student housing and they won’t be available to faculty. Because I can do it for graduate student housing, and no one will stop me.”

So we got off the phone and I sat there. I remember, I put my feet up on Kelly’s desk and I thought about it for a few minutes. Then I had an idea. I called M.R.C. back and I said, “Look, M.R.C., here’s the deal. Here’s what I want to do. I want you to get to an agreement. I’m going to call the union next. But here’s my deal. I’m not going to intervene in your negotiations, but if at the end of the day you don’t get to an agreement, and the housing falls through for faculty, what I insist from you, as chair of the senate, is to get from you your last and best offer. Whatever it is. I want to know what your offer was to the union, your final offer, if you don’t get to an agreement. I’m going to ask the same question of

the union people and then I'm going to publish it. And I'll let the faculty decide who was being unreasonable."

Reti: Publish it to the senate.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I called the union folks and I told them exactly the same thing. I wasn't asking them for anything. They couldn't refuse me, at the end of the day, if this failed. It would be a scandal, I think, if they refused to give me that information. And sure enough, within a matter of days, they got to an agreement and it was done. To me, this was a great example of having no leverage but figuring out a little bit of leverage and using it to good effect.

Reti: Absolutely.

Blumenthal: So that's how we got this.

Reti: That's really interesting. I never would have thought of that as a faculty benefit. But it makes total sense, if you think about it.

Blumenthal: And think about it—if M.R.C. were deemed unreasonable in terms of the rents that she was proposing to charge, then the faculty would be really angry at her. But if the union was unreasonable in terms of the rents that they thought could be charged, then they stood in danger of losing some of their dues-paying members.

Reti: Right, right. And so, on any other campus of the UC system that was not unionized, that would not have been an issue.

Blumenthal: Yeah, it wouldn't have needed any agreement.

Okay. So let's move on to division chair. So I became chair. And, of course, I realized from day one that it was going to be challenging and that the first major challenge was going to

be the first senate meeting, because I'd been to the senate meetings during Roger's term, and they'd been chaotic. I thought a lot about what I wanted to accomplish and what I could accomplish. I'm not a real drill sergeant kind of person as an individual. On the other hand, I realized that what really was needed was some discipline in senate meetings, and that discipline could only come through strict application of Robert's *Rules of Order*. So, I got a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order* and I read it twice over the summer before the first senate meeting. (Reti laughs) *Robert's Rules of Order* is a pretty long book and it is really boring, but I wanted to go into that meeting and not be in a position where anyone understood the rules better than I did. So it took a huge investment to do that.

Secondly, I had to calm myself down to be dispassionate and show no emotion when that first senate meeting came. I knew it would be a point of high drama.

Reti: Because you were new, or because there was something in particular on the agenda?

Blumenthal: There were agenda items that were of importance, but there was nothing earth-shattering. But I knew that the first thing that was going to happen was that I was going to be tested. One of the reasons I was pretty sure of that was because I decided prior to the meeting, after I became chair, I would reach out to Joel Yellin¹⁴⁴ and I'd go meet with him to hear what his concerns were about the senate. So I spent a couple of hours in his office meeting with him. (laughs) It was all very pleasant. We were both very polite to each other. Yellin is a smart man and he had strong opinions about a lot of things. But I didn't emerge from his office actually understanding where he was coming from. I mean, usually if you talk to somebody for two hours, you get a sense of their overarching philosophy, so that you kind of understand what they're aiming toward. You kind of could predict on a new issue what their position would likely be. I didn't emerge that way. As I tried to reconstruct that conversation in my mind afterwards, it felt so chaotic that I really

couldn't draw any general conclusions. It was good that we had the conversation, but I knew that he and I would be locking horns. And then, there were a few others as well who I thought would be there.

So the day of that first senate meeting came, I remember Alison wished me well, and said, "Go forth!" Because she wasn't up there in front of the room. The way the senate meeting works is the chair's up there with the secretary, the senate director, and the parliamentarian.

And then a piece of really good news happened. The parliamentarian decided not to come. I don't know if he was sick, or traveling, or just wimped out, but he decided not to come, which was really good. I was very pleased about that because I didn't trust him. I mean, not that he was a distrustful person. I didn't trust that he knew the rules as well as I did. And since rulings come not from the parliamentarian, but from the chair—the parliamentarian's role is only to advise the chair. The chair issues rulings. I didn't want to be publicly disputed by my parliamentarian.

So I thought that was a good piece of news. Then the meeting happened. Naturally, there were lots of challenges. In fact, it really annoyed me. I have to tell you, I was up there seething at times at the behavior of some people. I was really angry. But I wouldn't let it show. Butter wouldn't melt in my mouth. I just wanted to be calm and collected, even though I really wasn't calm and collected inside, I was determined that that's what the world would see.

It was a very well-attended senate meeting, which surprised me as well. And then, of course, it all started. Joel Yellin started raising points of order and I started ruling on them. Then he would object. I was very clear with him. I said, "You may not debate a point of order once the chair has ruled. You may appeal the ruling to the floor, in which case

we'll take an immediate vote on whether to uphold my ruling or whether to reverse my ruling, and a majority vote wins. But that's all that can happen once I've ruled on a point of order." I was very calm about it. I gave him every opportunity to appeal, but he never did. In fact, nobody ever did. And so, I just proceeded.

Interestingly enough, I did make some mistakes that day in terms of procedure. Apparently, I'm the only one who noticed. Then we had an interesting little sidelight, because there was a report from the Committee on Privilege and Tenure to the senate, that had to be presented by the chair of the committee from last year, who was me.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I anticipated that that would come up. I anticipated that somebody, in this case Joel, would ask questions about that report, so I alerted Alison that I would step out of the chair when called upon to report as the former chair of Privilege and Tenure, and then step back into the chair when that item was done. We just did it as smoothly as we could.

Reti: So she became the chair for that section?

Blumenthal: Yes. She took the gavel for that period. So we basically went through the meeting and we got through all the business; we got through our agenda; we got some stuff passed. We just did what we needed to do. I think outwardly I was very calm about it and matter of fact. I don't think I was at all inwardly calm. But afterwards, God, people came up to me and they were so grateful. I was told I did this wonderful thing. It really wasn't that wonderful thing. I had just made a decision and kept to it. There was a reception after the senate meeting and people were very, very complimentary after the reception, which was nice, although I didn't really feel like I deserved it.

Reti: They were probably so relieved to not be dealing with chaos. It's very stressful.

Blumenthal: Yes, I'm sure that that was it. And then it was funny, the next day I met with Mary-Beth and Alison, and I think Dave Bellinger, who was the secretary of the senate. We had a meeting in Mary-Beth's office. She was really pleased with how the meeting had gone. I said, "Okay, now let's talk about my mistakes." I had a list of about four or five mistakes that I felt like I had made. Nobody would talk about it. (laughs) They said, "This was great! What are you, crazy?"

I said, "No, come on. If you make mistakes, you've got to figure them out and not make them again." They wouldn't talk about it. I just couldn't get them to do it. To them, it was a great success, so why look a gift horse in the mouth? But I was determined that I was going to understand my mistakes and not make them again. Maybe that's my obsessive personality. But anyway, that was the first meeting and that was kind of a great way to start off my chairship. I'm really pleased that it worked so well.

I was lucky. I had a very, very strong senate executive committee and I had a really excellent vice-chair. Alison Galloway was a great vice chair and I really appreciated her. As I said earlier, I really didn't even know her when we both assumed office. But we soon developed a strong relationship. And we frequently had lunch, probably every other week or something. Alison was a single mom. So for her, this was difficult. I think one of those years, she even chaired her department as well. How she did all of that, and kept her research going, and kept all of her consulting going was beyond me because she was constantly called out on cases. But in any event, she really was an excellent vice chair, and she brought a good alternative perspective to mine, and I really appreciated that. I think we worked well together and I was really delighted when she became chair after me.

In fact, one of the things I decided to do as my term came toward an end, was we decided to do a mock senate meeting so that she could practice leading the senate. I got to play the role of Professor Screamin.’ (laughter) I thought it was a lot of fun. I don’t know if she thought it was fun. She did a great job. She brought a lot of ideas to the table, and a lot of sensibleness to the table as well. But beyond Alison, there were a number of strong people there. I think I may have mentioned before Carol Freeman, who was chair of the Committee on Educational Policy.¹⁴⁵¹⁴⁶ She was rock solid. When problems developed, she figured out how to deal with them. She was tremendously committed to the campus.

The Graduate Council was led by Quentin Williams. Quentin is really smart and really good, a tremendous intellect who’s played many roles. He later went on to chair CCGA, which is the systemwide graduate group and did some important work there during that time. When he was chair, I think one of the big issues that came up, and I know it’s one that upset M.R.C., was that they suspended the mathematics PhD program. The reason was that math graduate students were not getting supervision. The chaos in the department, which I had mentioned earlier, I think, played a big role in that. And ultimately, the Graduate Council on campus suspended the program, which is within their jurisdiction to do. And when they did that, the next time I saw M.R.C. and John [Simpson], M.R.C. was furious. She felt, I think, that that detracted from the seriousness of the campus, that we would suspend a graduate program in our own math department. On the other hand, I think she understood the reasons why that happened. I think it all worked out well. Because she and John (and I give John a lot of credit here), worked out a plan by which, what will it take to get the math PhD program once again approved. They got through that. I don’t remember how long it was suspended. I don’t think it was that long, maybe a year or less. But they saw it was a problem and they solved it. I give them

credit. I had nothing to do with it, other than to support Quentin, because I think Quentin was doing the right thing.

I also, during that time, put in place a change which initially I was opposed to, but which I later changed my mind about. The Senate Executive Committee consists of the chairs of some senate committees, you might say the key, or the most important senate committees, which include Planning and Budget, Faculty Welfare, CEP, Graduate Council, and a few others. CAP, Committee on Academic Personnel. But it doesn't include all senate committees. There are far more senate committees than exist on the Senate Executive Committee. One question that came up early in my tenure as chair was whether or not we should include the Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAD). My initial reaction was no. I initially was opposed to it on the grounds that I thought that it was really important to keep SEC small, or as small as possible in order for it to be effective. I really didn't want to open the doors to more committees. I also felt that at least one committee shouldn't be on there, namely, the one I had chaired, Privilege and Tenure. But on the other hand, I didn't feel like I was in a position to tell the next chair that she should not be there.

So I was trying to hold the line. However, it didn't take me long to change my mind. What changed my mind was we had a discussion of some issue at the Senate Executive Committee, and one or two of the members made some comments that I thought were not at all sensitive to the diverse nature of the university. It upset me that no one really called them out on it. I realized, or maybe Alison or Mary-Beth pointed out to me, that if CAD were in the room, there'd be a natural person to point that out. So I changed my mind. I went to the chair of CAD and told her that I really wanted her to be on the executive committee. In fact, I made the executive decision as chair to invite her to SEC meetings, which I did. Then I sponsored legislation to formally add them to the executive

committee. I really, really wanted to do it, after I saw that incident. I guess I was hardheaded and took a little persuading, but I got there in the end.

Another issue that we dealt with, and I think I may have mentioned this already, is the WASC [Western Association of Schools and Colleges] review.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: I'll say just a few more words about it. I told you a little bit about the initial meetings. One of the great pleasures of being elected to chair the Academic Council was that I didn't have to stay with the WASC review. (Reti laughs) But what happened subsequently, and I had no role in this, was that ultimately when Lynda left to go to UCOP, Bill Ladusaw took over the WASC review and he did a super fantastic job.¹⁴⁷ It was painless, it was done, and it was done well, much like it was ten years later when Herbie Lee did it. Just very competently, very dispassionately, showing a high level of credit on the campus.

The other issue that started to come up, and this was kind of my instigation, was the LRDP. I've mentioned this before, but I'm going back closer to the beginning now. It was clear to me that we, as a campus, needed to start a new LRDP. We were growing; we were approaching the limits of the previous LRDP. I raised the issue with M.R.C., and was surprised by her reluctance to do that. And one of the things that most surprised me, actually shocked me, was at a certain point, as we were talking about gearing up, I suggested that she go and meet with the county supervisor, Mardi Wormhoudt.¹⁴⁸ I didn't know Mardi Wormhoudt yet. I knew her husband, who's a nice guy, but I didn't know Mardi. But I knew her politics. I knew her politically, so I knew she was not going to be an easy character for the campus to work with. But what surprised me was when I suggested that to M.R.C., she visibly winced. It was clear she did not want to do that.

Again, that kind of surprised me, because I always viewed M.R.C. as afraid of nothing. I don't know, maybe I misread that, but she was really reluctant to go down that road.

On the other hand, she realized that we had to do this LRDP, so we did have discussions, and we agreed to set up an LRDP committee that Tom chaired. Then we set up a faculty group that I think was called the Futures or something Committee, I forget exactly what, to look at the academic justifications for growth of the campus. So all of that got put in place and then I conveniently disappeared from the scene.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Vice-Chair and Chair of the Systemwide Academic Senate

Blumenthal: So at the end, I did run for vice chair and chair of the systemwide senate. And when I was elected—I'll talk a little bit more about that election in a minute—I was kind of surprised and disappointed when I told M.R.C., because she seemed disappointed. The Committee on Committees had approached me on campus and asked me if I would be willing to serve a second two-year term as chair of the senate here. I said that I thought that since Alison had done such a good job as vice-chair, that she deserved to be chair. I said there were two issues for me with extending my tenure as chair. One is that I was thinking about putting my hat in the ring for election to be council chair, but that, in addition, I thought that it was only right that Alison move into the chairship. I said I would do it only if I'm not elected chair of the systemwide senate *and* if Alison preferred that I do this.

So I did talk to Alison. Alison said she really did prefer that I do it again. She said she would agree to be vice chair still. She was quite fine—more than fine, it sounded like—if I did it. So I said I would do it if, in fact, I wasn't elected.

Well, of course, I was elected, so it did fall to her to become chair. Again, I was surprised when M.R.C. seemed disappointed. I didn't think that M.R.C. knew that I was running for systemwide office. But maybe she knew. I simply don't know. But I was a little disappointed that she seemed not particularly supportive of that.

Reti: Right. You would think she'd be excited that someone from UCSC was going to have this honorable position and represent the campus.

Blumenthal: Right. I just have no idea what was going on with her. Maybe I misread it, too because after that initial thing, she was fine. And she publicly said good things. But again, there was something going on with her and since she'd always been very supportive of me personally, I just couldn't quite figure that out.

All right. So now as I talk about the Academic Council and the Academic Assembly, let me just explain that when I became the chair of the senate here, I became member of the Academic Council and the Academic Assembly. The Academic Council consisted of all of the chairs of the ten campuses, plus a few key committee chairs. Just a few: Educational Policy; Planning and Budget; CCGA, the equivalent of the Graduate Council; Faculty Welfare; and BOARS, Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools.

Reti: These are systemwide chairs?

Blumenthal: Yes. Chairs of the systemwide committees.

Reti: Right. Because you're not talking about ten chairs, one from each campus. You're talking about the chair—

Blumenthal: Just for the committees, just the chair of the systemwide committee, but also the ten chairs of the divisions of the senate.

But in addition to the Academic Council, which served as kind of an executive committee of the senate, the council met monthly for an all-day meeting. They met on the different campuses. The first year I was chair, the council met on every campus, and they rotated it. That was the tradition. The second year and the third year, most of the meetings, maybe not all, but most of the meetings were held at Berkeley; in the Faculty Club at Berkeley, there's a meeting room. Then the next year, when I chaired the senate, I moved it to the Office of the President, actually across the street from the Office of the President. Cal State East Bay has an office building across the street, so that's where it met.

In addition to the Academic Council, I was also a member of the Academic Assembly, which as I think I mentioned to you before, is the official legislative body of the senate. It has sixty members. The sixty members include all of the members of the Academic Council, plus representatives from all of the campuses apportioned based upon the population of the campuses. I'm going to come back to that later. I'm going to want to talk about reapportionment.

So I was serving on those groups. Then I got a call from somebody. Must have been from the Provost's Office. I got a call from Michael Cowan, who was then leaving the chairship of the systemwide senate. He was the first Santa Cruz faculty member to chair the systemwide senate. I got a call from Michael just before he left office, knowing that I was coming in to be division chair, asking me if I would serve on the APC, the Academic Planning Council. So I agreed to do that. I served for four years on the Academic Planning Council.

The Academic Planning Council is chaired by the provost of the university, the executive vice president of academic affairs. It consists of a representative of the EVCs, a representative of the graduate deans, a representative of the vice chancellors for research,

a representative of the deans, various administrative representatives from the campuses, and several representatives from the senate, including the chair and vice chair of the systemwide senate, plus a few other senate representatives. So, Michael asked me if I would do that, and I did. And I'm really glad I did. I learned a lot from doing it. It gave me a chance to know Jud King, who was the provost.¹⁴⁹

That arm, that sort of joint administrative senate group, actually has accomplished a lot over the years. I might just add that I'm really pleased that right now, Marlene Tromp¹⁵⁰ is on that group and Kim Lau,¹⁵¹ our chair of the senate, is also on the group. So I feel Santa Cruz has good representation in that venue.

Anyway, I served on all of those bodies. They all had somewhat different dynamics. The assembly would typically meet between three and six times a year. I think the first couple of years, it probably met three or four times. The Academic Planning Council probably met twice a quarter and the Academic Council met every month. All of these were daylong meetings.

Reti: Wow, this is a lot of meetings.

Blumenthal: And that's in addition to chairing the division here. The chair of the senate when I became a member of the council, was Viswanathan from UCLA, whom we called Vis. He was an engineering faculty member, very committed to the senate. He was not a very strong chair, but he was extremely well meaning. He worked hard and he really tried to make things succeed. There were a lot of issues that came up during his time.

The way an Academic Council meeting would be run is there would be an agenda. The agenda would typically, with its attachments, would typically be between one and two hundred pages. (Reti gasps) There would typically be about twelve to fifteen items on a council agenda for the day. So you had to read a lot of stuff before a council meeting. But

it was well-prepared. I have always been struck that no administrative group that I've been on as chancellor has ever been as organized as the senate. The senate—every item was clearly labeled. It would be labeled with what the previous actions had been of the group. It would clearly label it as an action item, or not an action item, or a discussion item. Later, when I became chair of the senate, I actually put times on each item, so that we had a guideline for how long we could spend on each item. And then background material, which was always worth reading. So it did take a fair amount of work, and then a fair amount of travel to go, particularly when we met on the various campuses.

Reti: Were you getting course relief for this?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Two courses of course relief.

Reti: So you would still be teaching one?

Blumenthal: Well, my load at the time was two courses. But I still taught my two courses. I took the course relief as money, which I could put into a research account. I didn't want to give up teaching, so I still taught.

Anyway, so that's what the meetings were like. There were lots of interesting issues that would come up. I learned a lot. At a typical meeting what would happen is we would meet as a group in the morning, typically starting at nine till about noon. And then at noon, the president would come in with the vice presidents, usually all of the vice presidents. They would join us for lunch. And then after lunch, we would have a session with the president and the vice presidents, or maybe it would be during lunch, where they would tell us what's going on and then we would ask them questions. So that was very engaging. And then when they'd leave, we'd meet again on the rest of the agenda items.

So (laughs) I don't know why I did this, but when I started attending these meetings, I realized that when the president came, there were some questions it would be obvious to ask. And they always got asked. So I made a decision that at every meeting I'd think of a really good question that might not be so obvious, so I could get in a question and it would make him think. So I started doing that. Every meeting I would get to ask him a question. I'd always get called on, even though not everyone could get called on. But they soon realized that I was always asking an interesting question.

Reti: So can you think of an example of what one of those questions might have been?

Blumenthal: I remember one of them was on the labs. It had to do with the fact that at the time UC had been in the process of appointing someone to be the director of Lawrence Livermore National Labs and his appointment was vetoed by the Department of Energy. Some of that had leaked out. It hadn't become a big scandal. It hadn't leaked a lot, but it had leaked enough that I knew about it. So I asked him about it. I asked him about how could we possibly be working in concert with the Department of Energy if they were exercising that much control over what is fundamentally a university that embraces academic freedom.

He answered it very, very good-naturedly, I remember, although I think he was not pleased to be answering the question. And then, interestingly enough, when he and the other vice presidents got up to leave, I also left to go to the bathroom. I was standing there next to him in the restroom. And Dick turned to me and he said, "Well, you know, I didn't say this, but I'm actually flying to Washington, D.C. this afternoon because I want to confront the people at DOE about this."

Reti: Oh. (laughs) So this was Dick Atkinson.¹⁵²

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: Do you want to say more about your impressions of him as a president?

Blumenthal: I think Dick was a very good president. Dick clearly had in mind a desire to have an impact. Dick was a little bit of a force of nature, too. Very intimidating to people, I found. At UC San Diego he, of course, had been chancellor, and had been very successful, and had weathered the scandal of his personal life. He was sued by a woman who claimed that he had agreed to impregnate her, and that he had failed to deliver, so to speak. (laughs) And that ended up as a lawsuit. So you can imagine, as chancellor he had to defend that lawsuit. But he survived that. I think he was a very good chancellor at San Diego and I think that's why they chose him as president at UC.

Many years earlier, when Atkinson was appointed president, I paid very little attention to the goings on in Oakland at that point. I was aware of the search for a president, but I didn't know any of the characters. But what I did know was that there was one university president in the U.S. who was very much hated by the faculty in the astronomy department at his university, and that was Gordon Gee at Ohio State University. Gordon Gee was president of Ohio State. He had agreed to do a joint telescope venture with the University of Arizona and then while the president of the University of Arizona was visiting, after the agreement had been agreed to and signed, he pulled out. The astronomy department was furious. They regarded him as a liar, deceptive. I gave a colloquium at Ohio State around that time and I got twelve earfuls about what they thought of Gordon Gee. Interestingly enough, I actually know Gordon Gee now, but anyway, that's all I knew at the time. I didn't think much about it one way or another.

But I went to a conference. It was one of the conferences I went to abroad, because I remember I came home on a Sunday and Kelly had saved for me the *San Francisco*

Chronicle. The headline of the *Chronicle* was, “Regents to meet on Wednesday and appoint Gordon Gee president of UC.”

Reti: Uh-oh.

Blumenthal: That was the headline. It was a true headline. I was kind of shocked by that. I called Joe Miller in astronomy, because I knew Joe knew about Gordon Gee. He had told me some stories about Gordon Gee, and Joe was really close to the people at Ohio State. I called Joe. Joe had already seen this. Joe was shocked. He said he had called Gene Capriotti at Ohio State, and Gene thought at first that Gordon Gee was being appointed chancellor here. But then when Joe explained to him that he was going to be president of the whole UC system, they were just apoplectic.

So, lo and behold, by Tuesday, the *Chronicle* reported that there was a scandal (it was a pretty small scandal), at the University of Colorado that Gordon was associated with when he was there. Then on Tuesday it was announced that he’d withdrawn his name from consideration as president of UC. On Wednesday, the regents appointed Dick Atkinson. So all of that I knew and all of that is true. I don’t know much about the scandal. I’ve always believed that Joe had something to do with the story about Colorado. I don’t know, but it wouldn’t surprise me if Joe and Gene had somehow collaborated to find out some dirt and make sure that the appropriate reporter knew about it. But in any event, and if they did, my thanks. (laughs) Anyway, Dick was appointed president as a result of that.

So fast forward eight years. I’m on council. Dick announces he’s stepping down and he invited the entire Academic Council to dinner at his house at Blake House. Blake House is the official residence of the UC president, or at least it was. It is no longer, but it was. It’s this gorgeous mansion in the middle of this huge park in Kensington, but it’s very old and rundown, which is why it’s not used anymore. Anyway, we had dinner at Dick’s house.

It was very pleasant. Dick gave a speech at the dinner. It was a long speech, but if you boiled it down to its essence, what Dick said was, “When I was appointed president of UC, I know that I was not the first choice of the regents. But I also know that I was the first choice of the faculty. And so, we’re now doing a search for a new president. And if you, the faculty, want to make sure that your choices and voices are heard, you need to be assertive and make sure your voices are heard.” That was basically his message to us.

Atkinson was really smart. He liked to be in control. There was no question who was in control. In fact, when Atkinson came to council meetings, he took the lead. There was no question who took the lead. He would sometimes put down some of the vice presidents who came with him, not real badly, but a little bit badly, enough so that we noticed. It was noted that he would insist on answering a question, or he would correct somebody. I sometimes correct people if I’m with them, but I try to do it nicely. And people at least with me know that if they correct me, that I won’t have any problem with that. But I don’t think anyone would correct Dick. That’s just not who he was.

On the other hand, he had some ideas about what he wanted to accomplish as president, and he did that. He took on the college board and forced the college board to change their SAT exams. He even threatened to eliminate the SAT exams for use by UC. But he was the one who forced them to include writing as a part of the SAT. Despite all the controversies and all the changes taking place lately, I actually think Dick was right, and I was strongly supportive of Dick’s changes. I think people need to know how to write and you need to measure it.

And Dick surrounded himself with people who would further his goals. His chief of staff was Pat Hayashi, who came from Berkeley as the admissions director at Berkeley. Dick wanted somebody around him who’s dealing with admissions issues, so Pat became his

chief of staff. And Dick hired Jud King to be his provost. Jud was a super administrator. Jud got stuff done. Jud understood issues, and Jud was easy to work with. Absolutely. Jud very much prioritized furthering Dick's agenda over any agenda of his own. But Dick could not have accomplished anything like what he did without Jud being there. They were a good team.

Anyway, (to get back to what we were talking about before) there were a few issues that came up during Vis's term. I think some of them were important. One issue was the Master Plan. There was a revision to the Master Plan for Higher Education being considered then, a major revision. The council discussed it, and at the end of our discussion, of our input, I was assigned, along with one other council member, to write up a position paper for the council on the new revisions of the Master Plan. So I put a lot of time into that. We submitted this to council, and council approved it. The university submitted our paper as one of the university submissions to the Master Plan Committee. The Master Plan Committee had done a first draft. and our submission was commentary on that first draft. What happened subsequent to that was really disappointing, because the Master Plan Committee then issued a second draft, essentially the final draft, which was very different than their initial draft. And it incorporated almost none of the comments that we had submitted. Furthermore, its whole conceptualization was very different than the first draft. There was virtually no chance to comment on it. It was adopted by the committee of the joint committee in the legislature by a majority vote, but with dissenters. And it was never adopted by the full legislature, which I guess showed that there was some common sense in Sacramento after all.

Years later, I ran into somebody who worked on that Master Plan. I remember they were arguing that we should go to the latest version of the Master Plan for guidance on a set of issues. I was just completely demeaning about that. I thought that Master Plan wasn't

worth the paper it was printed on. It was an interesting thing. I was very disappointed at how little impact we had. It was negative, almost.

Another issue that came up was domestic partner benefits at UC. That had elements of drama that I never even appreciated at the time. The council wanted to take a position on domestic partner benefits. And surprise of surprise, we strongly supported them. But there was some dissent on council. It was interesting. It was a dissent that I never really understood. The dissent was from a small group of council members who were supportive of domestic partner benefits for same sex partners, but not for mixed gender partners. Their argument basically was, well, they can get married. I just didn't see why it made sense to do it for one group and not for another. My view was kind of the majority view, but it was at least a little bit controversial in that regard. Ultimately, of course, the university adopted domestic partner benefits.

Reti: Yes. That was huge.

Blumenthal: And do you know about the regents meeting, when it was adopted?

Reti: No, I do not.

Blumenthal: I wasn't there. So everything I'm telling you, I heard from Bob Dynes.¹⁵³ It was going to be close. Everybody knew it was going to be close. The governor was Pete Wilson and he was very much against domestic partner benefits. So, as the vote approached, Wilson appointed a couple of additional regents. Regents can vote as soon as they're appointed, but they have to be confirmed within a year. Neither of these two appointments was confirmed, but they did get to vote on it.

But things got a little bit mixed up, because Ward Connerly, remember Ward Connerly?¹⁵⁴ (Reti laughs) In fact, he told me about this when I talked to him once. He changed his

mind. He had decided he was opposed to domestic partner benefits. But he said some gay alliance came to him at his office and wanted to talk to him. They talked about domestic partner benefits and they convinced him that it was the right thing to do. So he publicly announced that he was going to support the move for domestic partner benefits.

Reti: No kidding.

Blumenthal: He said that really ticked off [Governor] Pete Wilson. Pete Wilson was furious with him when he did that.

So the vote day came, and according to Bob, who was there, nobody knew how it was going to turn out. They knew it was going to be close. So they went to take the vote. They had the debate. The governor was there, so he could vote, too. They did a roll call vote and when they got to Velma Montoya, who was one of the regents, she was confused about the wording of the motion. So she said, "Pass over me and come back and I'll vote later." I served with Velma when I was faculty representative to the regents. Velma is a very nice woman. She's a very sweet woman. She's not the sharpest pencil in the pencil box and she's somewhat right-wing, generally speaking. She is married to a faculty member at UCLA, but is usually on the right-wing side of the board of regents.

Anyway, they completed their roll call and the vote was something like thirteen to twelve in favor of the motion, which was to establish domestic partner benefits. But according to Bob, everyone realized that this was a lost cause, because Velma would surely vote no. And a thirteen to thirteen, a tie vote loses.

Then they went back to Velma. Velma was still confused. So finally she, in frustration, said, "I'm not sure I really understand this. I'm going to abstain." So she abstained. It passed thirteen to twelve with one abstention. And that's how UC got domestic partner benefits.

Reti: That's quite a story, George.

Blumenthal: Again, I wasn't there. I'm just reporting what Bob told me.

Reti: I understand. History is made for the strangest reasons.

Blumenthal: Yes, indeed.

So let me talk a little bit about the leadership of the senate. I mentioned Vis. Vis's vice chair, who succeeded him the next year as chair, was Gayle Binion.¹⁵⁵ Gayle was an absolutely fantastic chair. We did so much during her year as chair. We accomplished a huge number of things, which I'll talk about. I can't say enough good things about Gayle. She managed to get through a whole bunch of really awkward and difficult mine fields and she did it with good grace. I was so impressed with her and I think she's one of the heroes of UC.

Her vice chair was Larry Pitts, who I hadn't known previously.¹⁵⁶ I'd heard of Larry, because he had served on council for many years. But he had not been on council the previous year. He was elected basically because he was so well known to members of the council. And so, he became her vice chair.

Larry was a neurosurgeon at UCSF. The first year while he was on council, while I was a member of the council and he was vice chair, we talked, but I didn't really know him very well. In fact, the main time I really talked to him was on one of the issues having to do with pensions, which I'll come back to later. Larry was really good. Larry became chair of the senate the next year when I was vice chair. I became close friends with him, and feel like he also accomplished a great deal. He was a great mentor and a great friend. And I sometimes feel like in English history, there were three strong monarchs in a row: Henry VII, Henry VIII and Queen Elizabeth. I sometimes feel like Gayle, Larry, and I were (Reti

laughs) similar to that in our leadership of the senate. But certainly, Gayle was great. And as you'll see, probably next time, when I talk about romantic relationships, you'll see that she was also quite sensitive to issues.

Reti: That Resolution on Romantic Relationships.

Blumenthal: Yes. So what do I talk about next? ANRs, Agricultural and Natural Resources. The head of ANR, or I think it was called DANR in those days, was W.R. "Reg" Gomes.¹⁵⁷ He was an interesting guy. I met him at one of the early regents meetings that I attended. There was a break in the meeting, maybe a demonstration or something. I remember I was sitting with him and he took the time to explain to me a lot of the dynamics of regents meetings that I would not have otherwise understood. I was really grateful to him. I thought he was really being very nice. But it turns out he was very unpopular of the head of ANR, of DANR.

And the year that Gayle was chair of the senate, several members of the council were DANR faculty members. And they all hated DANR's structure and leadership. So there was a lot of hostility toward Reg and DANR during that time. There was a strong feeling that there had never been a review of ANR, and that there needed to be a review. But nothing really got done, which was most unfortunate. But I do want to acknowledge that Reg was quite nice to me personally.

Later, and I guess I'm jumping ahead chronologically, when Larry became chair of the senate, Larry insisted upon there being a review of DANR. But it didn't happen because Bob Dynes had just become president and Dynes asked for more time, because he knew virtually nothing about DANR and he wanted to be more familiar before he did the review. So nothing happened on DANR during Larry's time. But I will say that while Larry was chair, that year we got more letters from faculty members complaining about DANR than

the sum of all of the other letters that we got complaining about everything else. So there was a lot of disenchantment. I know that Reg went on a so-called listening tour of the campuses at some point during that year. But I think it was too little too late to do that.

Reti: And this would not really affect Santa Cruz, right?

Blumenthal: Well, that's a big issue and it has always been a big issue, that we are excluded from certain funding opportunities even though we might be doing better work than other places that are getting those funds.

Reti: Right. This is something we could talk about later, but this would be relevant for the funding of the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, right?¹⁵⁸

Blumenthal: Right. Anyway, so when I became chair of the senate, I again went to the president and asked him to do a review of DANR, which he didn't want to do. So I finally said to him, "Look, Bob, one of two things will happen this year. Either you'll actually start a review of DANR, or as chair of the senate, I will initiate a senate review of DANR and we'll do it ourselves. I don't have a choice. There's so much pressure to do this, I can't put this off any longer. So if I do it, I'll do it. But I don't think you should want us to do it because there should be broader representation than you'll get just from the senate. You're the president. You control it. You're the one that this should report to, not me. So I really, really think you should do it." And so, he actually did do a review of DANR. And it brought about some, although probably not enough, changes.

A Few Loose Threads

Reti: So today is Thursday, December 20th. This is Irene Reti. And I'm about to traumatize George by saying this is our fifteenth segment together. (laughter) On this

quiet morning between the end of the quarter and our break for the holidays. So, George, we're going to start today by talking about a few loose threads.

Blumenthal: Right. And thank you, I apologize for the loose threads. When Kelly and I got married, soon after we got married, we bought our first house. That was on Escalona Drive. And we lived there for oh, gosh, a long time, probably about twelve or thirteen years, at least. It was a great house. We bought it from George Gaspari, who was a faculty member in physics. Over the course of the time that we lived there, we had two kids. We built a second story on the house, which was an interesting experience. We used to like to joke that our marriage survived one major remodel. (Reti laughs) But in fact, it's now survived several major remodels. I'm not sure I want to push it to one more. (laughs) Anyway, one of the things that we did while we were there is we got cats.

So I grew up with dogs and Kelly grew up with cats. We didn't have any pets. This was before we had kids. She always wanted a cat, a Siamese cat. I was kind of a little concerned, because cats weren't my thing. So finally, she took me to see this woman who had a million cats in her house and she said she had the perfect cat for us, really smart. We went there, we sat down, and this cat came over to me and he jumped up on my shoulders and he just stayed there. She said he was a really smart cat. He was a kitten and he could already fetch, which cats don't usually do. And so, I agreed that we could get him as soon as he was ready to be weaned from his mother, or whatever the appropriate thing was. So we did that.

And unfortunately, the timing was kind of funny, because we got the cat around the time that Kelly took her job in St. Louis. So we got the cat, but I was mostly taking care of the cat.

Reti: You were the cat parent.

Blumenthal: I was the cat parent and I got to name the cat. I named him Zwicky, after Fritz Zwicky, the astronomer who discovered dark matter. Zwicky was a self-described genius, but he could bite your nose off. And that was kind of what this cat was like. He was really smart, but he could bite your nose sometimes if he was in your face. He loved men, especially men with beards. And many is the time somebody with a beard came over to our house, if Zwicky was up on the mantelpiece, for example, and a guy came too close, he would just take a flying leap for shoulders. (Reti laughs) He often did that with me, jumped onto my shoulder. That was our first cat. Zwicky was a great cat.

I guess at the time we moved in, it was also the time that Kelly's mother moved out to Santa Cruz from Pittsburgh. So I used to joke that when we got married we bought a house, and then I lost my wife to the Midwest, and I gained a mother-in-law. (Reti laughs)

But anyway, I think of greater interest is that when we decided to have children a few years later—and I don't remember whether this was before or after our son was born, but it was around the time our son was born—Kelly was walking along the street one day and was almost hit by a speeding car that was driving along the street. We were living at a point on Escalona Drive where it was on a curve. There was a multi-road intersection just around the other side of that curve. Baldwin and Escalona and another street all came together at one point., it's a weird intersection. And clearly if you're speeding, it's a dangerous intersection.

Kelly got it into her mind that we needed a stop sign there. So she went around the neighborhood and talked to people, and everyone agreed that we should have a stop sign there. So she and I took this petition that she had gotten, and we went to the traffic commission in Santa Cruz. Little did I know that this was going to be the next six or seven or eight months of my life, going to the traffic commission in Santa Cruz.

So we presented this petition, and they were quite receptive and nice and agreed to talk about it. Then we started meeting with the staff of the traffic office, whatever it's called. The staff were not nearly as sympathetic to our wish for a stop sign, on two grounds, one of which had a certain logic to it. One is that they normally put in stop signs only at intersections that have been shown to be dangerous on the basis of accidents and casualties, and there hadn't been accidents.

Reti: So you wait for an accident to happen, and then get your stop sign.

Blumenthal: The other is—it was a weird intersection, a really weird intersection. It wasn't like two cross streets coming together. It was like three different streets coming together, and one of the streets is curving at that point. So it's a very awkward place, they argued, and almost impossible to put a traffic stop. So though Kelly came with me to the first meeting, I'm not sure if she came to many of the others. It somehow it fell to me to keep pursuing this. Because I was getting a little annoyed, I kept going back month after month to the traffic commission. I went probably to six or seven traffic commission meetings on this issue. I presented to them again and acknowledged that the staff had said this was going to be difficult. The commission heard me out and said, "Well, we'll really try to get them to do something." They instructed the staff to try harder. And so, the staff again came up with some ideas which were completely unacceptable, I thought. So again, I kept coming back to the traffic commission. I really was getting frustrated.

Finally, I decided enough of this, so I got some of the neighbors to come with me to the traffic commission. I asked them if I could do a brief presentation. I used overhead transparencies. This was before the days of PowerPoint. Today I would have done a PowerPoint. But even the transparencies were beyond what they usually saw. I said, "Look, your staff has said it's really impossible to do sensible stop signs here." "But," I

said, “I don’t know anything about traffic, but I can come up with five different plans.” And so, I put up five different transparencies with five different ways to do it, the fifth of which was a cloverleaf intersection. (laughter) I said, “Look, that’s the fanciest solution for safety. The other ones are safe as well and could work.” I said, “As far as I’m concerned, just pick one and I’ll be happy, and I think the neighbors would be happy.”

They were, of course, all very amused. And they did pick one. They decided that they would endorse doing that. Then we had to go to the city council. I was quite impressed. One of the city council people at the time, I think it was Mel Levine. I saw him out there at the intersection, walking around looking at it before the city council meeting. He did his homework.

Anyway, the city council approved it, and so it was ultimately built. The great irony is that one of the neighbors that came with me was our friends from across the street, a couple, Chris Griger and her husband. Chris was a pediatrician and her husband, Malcolm Kushner, was a humor consultant. He asked me for the transparencies, and he actually used them in some of his presentations subsequently on how to use humor in being persuasive.

Reti: Oh, that’s great. Love it.

Blumenthal: Another interesting irony is that after that last meeting, I was approached by the Santa Cruz police chief. He told me he had noticed how often I’d come to traffic commission meetings and had commented on a range of issues. He said there was a vacancy and he wanted to nominate me for the commission! However, I was going on sabbatical the next year, so I had to decline his invitation.

So that was my first experience working with the city government. And as I say, I thought about it, as I told you a minute ago, I thought about it when I saw Larry Pageler yesterday

at his retirement party.¹⁵⁹ Larry was at least one of those meetings in the early 1980s, talking about efforts by the university to ease parking in the neighborhoods adjacent to the campus. I wanted to make sure we got that story in. And so now we can go back to being senate chair.

Reti: Okay.

Reorganizing the Academic Senate Office

Blumenthal: All right. So the next thing to talk about is the reorganization of the senate office. So apparently a couple of years before I became chair, and I was unaware of this at the time, there'd been a major effort to reclassify and reorganize the Academic Senate office, on the grounds that the classifications of the people there were way too low. And apparently what happened is, it went to Staff Human Resources. Staff Human Resources actually had a lot of trouble figuring out the appropriate classifications in the senate office, because there's no other office on campus that's even remotely like the senate office in terms of the types of duties that they have. So they did a number of surveys; they talked to some of the committee chairs. They did do their homework. But at the end of the day, they denied all of the re-classes.

That had happened two or three years earlier. When I became chair of the senate, I was really quite ignorant of staff human resource rules and regulations. I knew a lot about *academic* personnel. I supervised some staff as chair of my department. But I was not that up on staff human resource rules.

So I tried to learn a little bit about what had happened, and I talked at some length with Mary-Beth, who was the executive director of the senate. I decided that we should try this again. The reason I was so committed to trying this again was, it seemed to me, that I couldn't tell you what someone in the senate office should be classified relative to other

people on campus. But what I could do is look around the UC system and ask, how are the equivalent jobs classified on other campuses? My understanding is that classification was not normally done that way, and I thought it should be. That convinced me that this was a worthwhile endeavor. So I decided that we really needed to go forward full speed. I had no idea how long and difficult that was going to be because ultimately it took the better part of two years. And so, it was actually good that I started this early in my term as senate chair.

First of all, we had to write up everything according to how you're supposed to write stuff like that up. Fortunately, Mary-Beth did that work. And then submit it. Then I decided that it was worthwhile for me to do some background lobbying. So I went to the EVC at one of my regular meetings with John Simpson and I told him what I was doing. I said, "This will eventually come to your desk, or eventually come back. But I want you to know that I'm going to make this a major effort." I tried to explain to him why I thought it was appropriate and equitable.

The other thing that I did is I outreached to all of the present and former chairs of the committees of the Academic Senate. I wanted to sensitize them to the fact that they were likely to be queried by SHR. I made no effort to tell them what to say, but I wanted them to understand that this was a major effort that was underway and however they responded to inquiries was going to be an important factor in determining how this all ended up. I wanted them to know that upfront.

And then the rest was waiting. (laughs) And waiting and waiting. There were things about the rules at Staff Human Resources that I didn't understand. I don't even know if the rules are the same today. But one of the things that really bugged me had to do with appeals. What would happen if they ruled negatively? The rules are set up that the staff member

can appeal. On the other hand, classification is not regarded as a right of the staff member. It is something that's proposed by a supervisor. It's proposed, and the decisions are not made on the basis of how good a staff member is. You could have the best staff member in the world, and he or she might not get reclassified. But it's only based on supposedly the nature of the position and the responsibilities of the position. So on that basis, I simply didn't understand why it was the staff person who has a right to appeal, rather than the supervisor who has a right to appeal. That still makes no sense to me. I don't know if it's still the rule. It was the rule way back in 2002.

That's the level of detail that I was looking at. I tried to work my way through the website on reclassification. I found it a daunting process, because to me, it didn't make sense. Anyway, to make a long story short, nothing happened for the longest time. Every now and then, we'd send an inquiry to say, "What's happening?" And they'd say, "Oh, it's in process, in process, in process."

So finally, around January of my second year, I asked for a meeting with Staff Human Resources people who were involved in this. We had a meeting, and they said, well, they still had more work to do, and they couldn't rush this. I said, "Well, I was thinking of saying something and raising this as an issue at the next senate meeting."

They said, "No, no. Don't do that."

I said, "Well, but you guys have taken a year. You've had this file for a year. And if this is a statement that you so little value the Academic Senate, I think that's something that the faculty of the university need to hear."

They said, "No, no. Please don't do that. That would be really bad."

So I said, “Fine. I won’t do it. I won’t raise this at the senate meeting. But hear me out. The last senate meeting of the year is in May. This will be the last meeting I chair as chair of the Academic Senate. And one of two things will happen at this senate meeting. Either I will announce that there has been a reclassification of the senate office, and I’ll explain how that works and what that means. Or there will be a resolution before the Academic Senate condemning the actions of the Staff Human Resources office in not recognizing the importance of the faculty.” (laughs)

Guess what?

Reti: (laughs) Wow.

Blumenthal: You know, use your leverage when you have it.

Reti: Were any of these positions unionized?

Blumenthal: I don’t think so. They were all analyst positions.

Reti: Okay. So you weren’t dealing with the union.

Blumenthal: No, it wasn’t a union issue. It was mostly analysts. And then there was also the executive director. And so, yeah, so in fact it came through and I was able to gleefully announce at the senate meeting that the senate office had been reclassified to a level that was more appropriately comparable to our sister campuses.

Reti: Good for you.

Blumenthal: But it was not easy. So anyway, that was an interesting adventure.

All right, now there’re a few issues to talk about. Why don’t we start with academic freedom? So I think this all started the second year I was on council, when Gayle was

already chair of the senate. It started at Berkeley. There was a course being offered at Berkeley called *Palestinian Poetry*, and it was taught by a TA. In the syllabus, or in the course description, it basically talked about the course, and then said, “Those who don’t agree with my philosophy should not take this class.” It was very a pro-Arab, pro-Palestinian kind of syllabus or summary of the course. Well, surprise surprise, this became public. The press got a hold of it. It became a cause célèbre in the newspapers. And needless to say, the regents got a hold of it. So it became a big issue. It led to several very uncomfortable meetings of the Academic Council with Dick Atkinson. Because Dick, of course, was the focus of the regents’ ire, and probably the governor’s ire, and anyone else. On the other hand, the content of courses is within the purview of the Academic Senate. So the question arose: what should Berkeley do about this? Well, the council is always loathe to inject itself into a campus matter and this was a campus matter. On the other hand, in an informal poll of the council, most of us strongly felt that the description was highly inappropriate and was not protected speech or protected by academic freedom, whatever academic freedom was, and that this was basically wrong.

I think that the faculty at Berkeley felt the same way because, to their credit, the Berkeley faculty also intervened and forced some changes in the course description, somewhat reluctantly, by the instructors of record. But they did force some changes and also said that they would monitor the course and have a faculty member from the department sit in on all of the course to ensure that the rights of individuals wouldn’t be abridged.

Their modified description as I recall (and I don’t remember the details), went partway. And in my opinion (now I’m giving you my opinion), it was borderline. I think the council felt the same way. There were those on council that felt it was fine. There were those on council who felt that it was not fine. My own view was it was borderline. They had inched their way just to the point of not totally offending sensibilities.

That led to a meeting of the council where Dick came in and was still furious, even after the changes at Berkeley. He wanted something done. There was great reluctance on the part of the council, including me, to do something at that point. It's one thing when something is clearly over the line. If you're responsible, you have no choice but to step in and do something. On the other hand, this modified version was, as I say, borderline. You don't want to fight the great battle over a borderline issue.

Dick was having none of it. I believe that Dick was motivated by feedback that he was continuing to get from regents. So he kind of lost it a little bit at the meeting. That evening we had one of the annual dinners we have had as a council where the presidents and the vice presidents were invited. In those days, they were held at the Women's Faculty Club and there was always a reception beforehand. I remember being just utterly shocked because I'm at this reception and Dick Atkinson comes over to me and we say hello. And he says to me, "Do you think I went overboard this afternoon?" I was kind of shocked, A, that he would ask anyone that question. And B, that he would ask me that question, since I didn't know him very well. (laughs) All I could do was try to be diplomatic and say, "I think some people interpreted it that way, but I understand the pressures that you're under." But I remember being so shocked that he would come over to me and say that because really, he didn't know me.

Revising the UC Policy on Academic Freedom

Anyway, one of the things Dick did as a result is he decided we needed a whole new University of California policy on academic freedom. The previous policy on academic freedom was literally a Xerox of a letter that was written by President Sproul back in like 1930. It might have been a few years earlier or later. It was a photocopy of a letter that Sproul had written, a one-page letter. Basically, the letter talked about academic freedom.

It was placed in the Academic Personnel Manual under APM010. But it was just a Xerox of this letter. That was university policy. The letter talked about academic freedom in terms of the need for faculty to remain dispassionate and objective.

And so, Dick did something very, very smart. He brought in Robert Post, who was then a law professor at Berkeley.¹⁶⁰ Robert was, and still is, one of the nation's leading experts on academic freedom. He asked Robert to assess whether or not UC needed a new academic freedom policy. He was motivated, of course, by this Palestinian poetry thing. So Robert came and he drafted a new policy on academic freedom, and he came to the Academic Council and he described it. He was so, so right. He pointed out that faculty are not dispassionate, that we encourage faculty to be passionate about what they do. The issue isn't dispassionate objectivity. The issue is professional standards. The core of academic freedom is that one should have the freedom to present academic material however one wants, as long as you do it in a way that comports with the professional standards of the professoriate. It's those standards that are the key. So the draft of the new academic freedom policy that he put together was completely different from the letter that Sproul had written those many years ago.

Now I do want to defend Sproul. I think, for the times, his letter was probably right on course. It was probably consistent with the standard AAUP standards that were developed in the 1920s as well. So, it wasn't as though Sproul was necessarily out of touch. It's just that times changed.

Reti: The whole notion of objectivity had been completely questioned by the early 2000s.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: We were in a profoundly different time.

Blumenthal: So Post drafted up this new academic freedom policy. He and Dick Atkinson brought it to the Academic Council. I have to say that the council was kind of shocked by it, in the sense that we were shocked that Dick would go as far as he did in supporting that new policy. We loved it. There was no controversy about it whatsoever, at least from the Academic Council's perspective.

So we spent the next number of months arguing over a word here and a comma there. Those discussions went on, but I think that the final policy that was adopted was almost identical to the original proposal from Robert Post. So we discussed it at an Academic Assembly meeting. I'll say some other things about that particular Academic Assembly meeting later on other topics. (I'm getting more topical now, rather than sequential.) And ultimately, it was discussed at an assembly meeting. In those days, maybe still today, our thought was to bring items for a discussion for one meeting, and then enact them the next meeting. So we had a discussion of it in the spring of 2003. And then, because there wasn't another assembly meeting scheduled, and Dick was going to be leaving office, we agreed to hold a special meeting of the Academic Assembly in the summer. They made it an in-person meeting to "enact" the policy.

I use the word "enact" with air quotes, which you can't see in a transcript, obviously. But because officially the Academic Personnel Manual is a presidential document and it's owned by the president, the president decides what goes in the Academic Personnel Manual. However, because it is the Academic Personnel Manual, it requires extensive consultation with the Academic Senate. It would be difficult, though not impossible, to put things in there that the senate opposes. In fact, I gave an example of one such thing a few sessions ago. But on an issue like academic freedom, which is so close to the core of the academic mission of the university, I think it would be unthinkable to put something in that the senate didn't agree with.

So we held a meeting in the summer. Dick came to the meeting and he publicly strongly supported our adoption of this particular version of the academic freedom policy of 010. The assembly adopted it overwhelmingly; it might have been unanimously. I don't remember. But overwhelmingly adopted it. So that was great. I thought we were done. I was a bit naïve.

By that point, I'd already been elected the incoming vice-chair of the systemwide senate. I happened to be in Oakland, for some reason, one day a few weeks later. This was before I took office. While I was there, I stopped in to chat with Gayle Binion, the chair of the senate. Gayle and I had become quite good friends —close. And while I was in her office chatting with her, Dick's chief of staff came in, Pat Hayashi.¹⁶¹ He's a good guy. Pat came in to interrupt us and said that Dick, before he issued this particular academic freedom policy, had a few small changes that he wanted to make, small editorial changes. So he told Gayle about them. I'm sitting there listening to this conversation. And as I recall, there were like four changes. Three of the four were like commas. But the fourth one was a change in the title, or a change in the overarching title, because the title was written in such a way that it could have been interpreted as including students within academic freedom policy.

So while I was sitting there, I objected, and said, "Look, I don't have a problem with a comma here or a comma there, but I do object to changing the title. I mean, after all, Dick came to the assembly and he endorsed this version of it. This is the version that we passed as an assembly. I don't think that Gayle or I have the authority to modify an approval that the Academic Assembly has given. Gayle can tell you what she thinks. But that's what I think." I guess I had jumped in there in that conversation.

So he said, “Okay, thanks for letting us know,” and he went away. I didn’t think anything more about it.

Fast forward a couple of months. Now it’s September. I’ll talk about coming up to Oakland another time. But I’m there; I wasn’t there very long and I get this notice from the president’s office that Dick wanted to see me on Thursday at 10 a.m. (laughter) So normally I would have been concerned about why Dick wanted to see me, but it was particularly concerning because, this is kind of embarrassing, but I’ll just say, I had scheduled a driver’s test that Thursday at 10 a.m. to renew my license. I don’t think I had to drive, but you had to get an appointment. I didn’t want to cancel it because my eyesight was going (because of developing cataracts), and I figured if I was going to have trouble passing a seeing test, I wanted to know that before my license expired, not when.

It turned out that I had developed cataracts. So in fact, after I passed my driver’s test, which I did pass, I very soon thereafter went in and had cataract surgery on both eyes. So the issue became moot in terms of my being able to see. But at that moment in time, I was very sensitive about that issue. And I wasn’t going to change my 10 o’clock appointment with the DMV. So I basically said, “No, I’m happy to meet with him another time.”

They came back and said, “Well Dick expects either to have people comply with his request or to give him an appropriate excuse. You have to understand.” That, I’m sure, may have been the policy at UCOP, but I was a faculty member, and I wasn’t used to that kind of regimentation. So I refused. I don’t know what I said, but I said no. I was sensitive about this eyesight thing, even though I can laugh about it now. At the time, it just felt—it was embarrassing. (laughter)

So anyway, I went to my appointment, got my license renewed, and all that was fine. Didn’t think anything more about the Dick request, because I never heard back from his

office until two-thirds of the way through September, Larry Pitts, who was the chair of the senate, and I, we had a regular meeting with Dick Atkinson, or with all of the presidents, a few days before the Academic Council meetings so that we could go over with them the council agenda, raise with them any questions that were likely to come up that they might be asked at the Academic Council. And I then realized why my questions to Dick had been so interesting because they never had anticipated some of my questions. And in addition, these meetings were just a general touch base. So it was a normal thing to have happen.

However, Larry couldn't be at the meeting because he was on the search committee for the new vice president of lab management. So he had to skip the meeting. And typical—it was very typical of Larry—he said, “Okay, George, you just go do it.” He didn't feel the need to reschedule even though I'd only been there a few weeks.

So I went. It took Dick and me about five minutes to go through the council agenda. Then Dick wanted to talk about academic freedom. He said he felt very strongly that before he issued this policy, he wanted to be explicit in the exclusion of students, and that the policy didn't in any way, shape, or form apply to students.

I said I had two issues there. One is that I was reluctant to change anything that had been passed by the assembly. And secondly, that I was not sure I agreed with him that in no way, shape, or form does academic freedom apply to students. He said, “No, no, it can't. It can only apply to faculty.”

I said, “Look, I'm not saying that I disagree. I'm just saying that it isn't so clear to me.” I said, “Let me give you an example.” I was really proud of this example that I came up with. I said, “Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that I write an article that says that the moon is made of green cheese. Totally crazy article. And I write it with one of my graduate students. And let's just say that I publish it in a peer-reviewed journal and it gets through

the peer review, which many crappy articles do. Then somebody comes along and says, ‘I want to fire Blumenthal because he’s a nutcase, because he believes the moon is made of green cheese,’ and they can’t do it because I published this in a peer-reviewed journal, I’ve conformed to professional standards. My academic freedom would absolutely protect me against being fired for having published that paper. But do you think that you should be able to fire my graduate student for having been a co-author of the paper? Why should I be protected and the graduate student not be protected?”

Dick didn’t buy the argument. He absolutely didn’t buy it. We just were there, arguing. It was really an uncomfortable meeting.

Then Larry popped in because there was a break in the interviews they were doing. And Larry, being always the mature adult, when he heard about the dispute we were having, he said, “Look, here’s what we’re going to do. George and I can bring this to the Academic Council and we’ll raise the issue of the change with them. We’ll even back off and let council members opine on it without their hearing our opinions. And so, we can then form a more informed decision about whether the Academic Council would support such a change.”

It was a very sensible thing to do. Larry went off. Dick and I talked about a couple of other things we had to talk about. Then the meeting was over. I got up to leave. And he said, “No, no. Sit down.” My hour was up. He kind of leaned back, and suddenly he became very friendly. I think he was being reflective because he was like a week or two away from leaving the presidency. He asked me how many of the UCSC chancellors had I known? (Reti laughs)

I said, “I know all of them.”

He said, “What did you think of them?”

I said, “You want to know what I thought of each of the chancellors?” He said yeah. So I went through every chancellor and I told him what I thought.

And at the end he said, “You know, I pretty much agree with everything you said except one.” He said he disagreed with one situation that I described. And I have to say, in retrospect, I actually have now come closer to his view about that person. And that was Karl Pister.

Reti: Oh, yeah. We did talk about how you changed your mind about Pister.

Blumenthal: Over the years, I’ve come to much better appreciate the many contributions Karl made, which weren’t so apparent to me when I was a faculty member. So, in fact, at the end of the day, Dick and I ended up completely agreeing. But I was surprised that he also agreed with me on my other criticisms of chancellors.

Reti: Do you think that he subscribed to the idea that Santa Cruz was ungovernable? I’d be interested to see how the president was thinking of our campus at that moment.

Blumenthal: I don’t think so, except in some limited sense, which I’ll explain in a second. It’s a good question. The reason I don’t think so is because most of the time when Dick was president, M.R.C. Greenwood was chancellor. And M.R.C. would never have agreed to any idea of ungovernability, nor did it seem all that ungovernable when M.R.C. was here. But the one point on which he would have agreed with the ungovernability aspect was town/gown relations. He was acutely aware of the issues of town/gown relations. That awareness continued till today, literally. I’ve seen Dick a few times since he stepped down as president. I think the most recent one was when Pradeep Khoshla was inaugurated as chancellor about five or six years ago. Every time I see Dick Atkinson, he asks me about town/gown relationships, so I think that is something that very much weighed on his mind.

But in any event, it was kind of an amazing shift. He was very friendly, and very nice. And then he went into a little spiel about how tough times are coming, and it's going to be really hard around here. I remember thinking, as he was saying that about times are going to be tough, budget's going to be tough, etcetera, I remember thinking, well, he may be right, but it's still important to be optimistic about the future of the university and to deal with whatever challenges we have. I was feeling optimistic and hopeful, even though tough times were coming.

Reti: What was going on in particular? "Tough times were coming." This was before the 2008 recession by quite a bit.

Blumenthal: This was in 2003, so we were just about to go into a recession, but it wasn't the great recession. This was just when Schwarzenegger came in. I remember thinking afterwards, when you leave an office, it's easier to be more pessimistic about the future because maybe you're more realistic, but certainly you don't have quite the same investment over the next few years. I knew that I felt invested and I think I'm more naturally optimistic about things, which frankly stood me well.

Anyway, that was the policy on academic freedom. It had a couple of epilogues. The first epilogue was when I was vice chair, and also the faculty representative to the regents, one of the people I interacted with a fair amount was the student regent at the time, Matt Murray, who was exceptionally bright and engaged. I interacted a lot with all of the student regents, both when I was on the regents as faculty advisor, even when I went off the regents as faculty advisor, and then subsequently as chancellor, I've always interacted a lot with the student regents. Some of them I'm still in contact with.

The first student regent that I really interacted with was Matt Murray, who was one of the rare undergraduate student regents. He was from Riverside. Matt was brilliant. When he

graduated, he went to Harvard Law School. I ran into him a year or two ago. He's now practicing labor law in Oakland. But Matt was really good, and he was really interested in the academic freedom issue and what student academic freedom might mean. So I arranged for him to be invited to the university-wide Committee on Academic Freedom, which is a standing senate committee, to talk about student academic freedom.

To go back and close that loop, after that meeting with Dick Atkinson, the agreement was that Larry and I would bring it to the Academic Council. We would discuss it in council and decide as a result of that discussion what would be the appropriate course of action—whether to make the change, whether to bring it back to assembly, or whether to hang tough on the existing wording. And about two days after that meeting, I was talking to Larry in Larry's office, and Pat came over and said, "The president has decided to issue the policy as written." So he basically caved. So that's how it was issued. It's still the policy today. Hasn't been changed.

But that discussion about students and academic freedom continued, and ultimately a policy emerged which became an addendum to APM010 about student academic—it's got a very carefully worded name; it doesn't even say "academic freedom." It says "student rights of freedom of expression," or something like that. It's a very careful expression of student academic freedom, very well done. It talks about the freedoms that students have to have their views, to express their views, to dissent, whatever. But it carefully couches it with two major caveats in there. One is that students are still obliged to do the work in their courses. And two, that these rights that students have of freedom of expression derive from the faculty rights of academic freedom, as ensured by the Academic Senate. So it basically imbued the Academic Senate with the authority and obligation to protect student freedom of expression. So it was very well done. And it's now an addendum to APM010.

After O10 was adopted, or really, while O10 was being developed, the unionized lecturers at the university were renegotiating their contract. The head of the union was, for a while, a faculty member at Santa Cruz, Jeremy Elkins, who was in legal studies, who later left the university. When he left the university, the head of the union became, a former city council member from Santa Cruz, Mike Rotkin. And so during that time, I had a number of conversations with Jeremy and with Mike about academic freedom. My goal was to make sure that they understood what had just happened. They were interested because they wanted to include those protections in their union contract. So I tried to explain to them what all of this meant and how this worked. Indeed, they did negotiate something akin to APMO10 in the lecturers' union contract, which, as I understand it, still continues today. But again, I haven't followed that at all since that time.

What's happened more recently is that the issue has come up about what are the academic freedom rights of librarians, of other non-faculty academics? For example, researchers or postdocs or whatever. That's an undetermined issue based upon university policy. We now have a policy on students and we have a policy on faculty. And there's a union agreement on lecturers. But the others fall through the cracks. It's become a big issue for some of the librarian union discussions currently.

The powers-that-be in the university, including the Academic Council currently [in 2018], felt that this was an issue that should be dealt with as an intrinsic right, not as a union negotiating position. So as a result of those discussions, Michael Brown, who is the provost of the university, has appointed a task group co-chaired by Robert May, who's now the chair of the university-wide senate, and me, to develop a policy on academic freedom rights for non-senate academics. So that's an effort that we will be doing over the next six months. How it will turn out, I don't know. I have my own opinions. I can tell you now, my opinion, but it may not be my opinion at the end, is that we should do something

analogous to students. We should establish the rights for these academics—whether we call them academic freedom or freedom of expression, I’m neutral on—but I think we should establish those rights. I think those rights should be guaranteed by the Academic Senate. The senate should be still the holder of the keys to academic freedom, and that we need to make clear that everyone needs to do their job. That’s important. Because as a faculty member in astronomy, if I decide to spend the rest of my career writing articles about higher education or articles about Buddhist philosophy or whatever, I have the academic freedom to do that. No one can stop me. Even if I’m a member of the astronomy department. I can choose my areas that I do scholarly inquiry. As long as I do them according to the professional standards, in this case, of people who do Buddhist philosophy or whatever, I can do that. I’m not sure it’s appropriate for librarians to do that. I’m not sure it’s appropriate for postdocs to do that, because they’re hired on contracts with specific job responsibilities. So I think that’s something we’ll have to figure out in more detail. But anyway, I think it’s worthwhile to fill this hole in our understanding of academic freedom rights for people at the university.

Reti: Absolutely.

Blumenthal: So, that’s pretty much it on academic freedom.¹⁶²

Senate Resolution on Romantic Relationships

All right. So let’s talk about the Resolution on Romantic Relationships. Boy. Let me start with a little bit of history. And again, my history is all going to be things that I saw and knew about. So way back in the, could have been the late ‘70s or early ‘80s, maybe even in the mid-’80s, there was a flurry of discussion about the appropriateness of faculty/student romantic relationships. It was discussed in the press; it was discussed by the regents. I know that the university-wide Committee on Privilege and Tenure at the

time said that they would take up the issue as a matter of policy and do something about it. I remember reading about all of this. I was divorced from it at the time. I had nothing to do with these groups.

I was concerned about it. When I first came to Santa Cruz, I did actually see, romantically, a former student of mine, who was no longer a student of mine, who did take a class from me, but who at the time our relationship started, it was clear she would never again be taking a class from me. She was in a completely different area, etcetera. But nevertheless, I did date a student as a member of the faculty and I felt a little bit awkward about it, not awkward enough to not do it. At the time, there was no policy prohibition. And it only began well after she had been a student. But nevertheless, it caused me a certain amount of soul-searching, as I thought about the issue. I didn't want to be put in a position where something I had done was illegal. I know there's no ex post facto. But anyway, I had thought about the issue a little bit and I did at least have some feelings about it.

And then the issue came up again, many years later, in the late 1990s, when, just at the time—so I think I talked about the changes that I had done in the faculty code of conduct, and the changes—

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: —overseeing as chair of the universitywide Committee on Privilege and Tenure. We brought those changes to the regents at the end of the previous year. We brought that to the regents near the end of my UC Privilege and Tenure chairship. So just before, or just as I was becoming chair of the Academic Senate at Santa Cruz, and therefore joining the Academic Council, in fact, it probably went to the regents even after, I'm not sure I remember exactly when.

So it went around for comments by the campuses. When it went to the regents, it was approved. There was no serious dissent to the changes. We made extensive changes in the code of conduct. But Judy Hopkinson, who was one of the regents, raised the issue of why hadn't we included a ban on romantic relationships.

Reti: And had that been done at other campuses?

Blumenthal: At the time, very few other universities had done that.

Reti: Never mind UC, any universities.

Blumenthal: UC had not done anything. There were a few, but relatively few. But Judy raised it as an issue. She felt pretty strongly about it. So it kind of burbled around a little bit within the Academic Council during my first year on the council. I know Viswanathan discussed it at one point. And I know during that discussion, I raised some objections to the approach that people were suggesting. And again, part of my objections had to do with the fact that I'd experienced it. And on the other hand, I didn't think it was an inappropriate thing to discuss, and I recognized that there could be a real imbalance of power in such relationships.

So then it burbled over into the next year when Gayle Binion was the chair of the senate. Gayle felt that this was an issue that needed to go forward. So we had a number of discussions over a period of many, many months about this issue within the Academic Council. I told Gayle at the beginning of the year that I had real reservations about a proposed policy that was being developed. I explained to her why. And I have to give it to Gayle. She was really respectful of my reticence. She was very smart.

Anyway, at a certain point, Judy Hopkinson came to one of our council meetings. In fact, the council met in Santa Barbara. So Judy came. She lives in Santa Barbara. She came to

the council meeting and it was a very raucous meeting because Judy took a very hard line. She argued that no student at the University of California should ever, under any circumstances, be involved in a sexual or romantic relationship with a faculty member. Full stop.

Reti: So it doesn't matter whether it was a completely different department, or they never were going to take a class from that person. Just they were a student; this was a faculty person.

Blumenthal: Exactly. I think I stayed pretty quiet, because I was troubled by all this. I had a lot of sympathy for the concerns and the issue, but again was troubled by the fact that I had struggled with this issue myself. In fact, I think one of the reasons I ultimately broke up with this young woman was because I just couldn't quite handle our different statuses.

Reti: Right. And we should add that you were probably, what, like 25 or 26 at the time?

Blumenthal: Well I was like 27, 28. And she was an older student, by the way. She was a re-entry student.

Reti: Okay. I just think it's important for people to remember that.

Blumenthal: I hasten to add, this was before I met my wife. (laughs)

Reti: I assumed so.

Blumenthal: Anyway, at the council meeting, one of the faculty members on council, and he was the chair of the division at Davis, and he was a veterinarian, he gave this eloquent comment. He said, "I'm a veterinarian faculty member at Davis. My wife, when I met her, was a law student at Davis Law School. We fell in love, we got married, we had

two children.” And he said to Judy, he said, “Are you telling me that there was something inappropriate about my relationship with my wife, about me meeting this person, who I had nothing to do with as a student?” I thought he was very, very eloquent in the way he said it. I think he was right.

Judy’s position at the time was no student at UC with no faculty member at UC, period, full stop. So she was pretty strong about that and she could make arguments about it. You can make the argument.

Anyway, I remained very troubled by all of this. I thought there needed to be a policy about the potential abuses by faculty members with their own graduate students; the abuses of faculty members with students in their classes. And the unseen victims, namely, other members of the class, if there’s a romantic relationship between a faculty member and one of the students in the class—I thought these were all really legitimate issues. So although we discussed it over a period of months at council, I remained very disturbed by all of this. Then finally one day I just got so tired of being kind of on the fence that I spent an evening—I probably should have done this months earlier—but I spent an evening doing some research. I researched all of the other universities and what their policies were. There were not many universities that had developed policies. Most of them weren’t necessarily the mainstream universities that we know.

Reti: Right. Not comparable to the University of California.

Blumenthal: Yes. Non-comparable. And their policies were not very compelling to me. So then I realized, oh, I know exactly what I should do. I should go to the AAUP, American Association of University Professors website. They have draft policies on everything. So I searched their website for a policy on romantic or sexual relations and couldn’t find it. And then I decided, well, maybe it’s hidden somewhere else. So I looked through the

website and I ultimately found it embedded within another draft policy. They have draft policies for universities to adopt. It was embedded within their draft sexual harassment policy.

Now, I hasten to add that romantic relationship issues are distinct from sexual harassment. They may involve sexual harassment. But it is possible to have a completely consensual relationship without it being at all sexual harassment. And by embedding their policy within sexual harassment, and I think they even admitted that somewhere on the website at the time. But anyway, I found their policy. I was so happy to find the policy because I figured this is the policy I should support. When I read their policy, I was immensely disappointed. Because basically it acknowledged the issue being an issue, and then basically said nothing. It didn't talk about making prohibitions. They talked about conflicts of interest. It wasn't a policy with any teeth to it. I was immensely disappointed.

So the next day I called up Gayle Binion, and I told Gayle what I had done. And I told her, "I'm giving up. I'm ready to be fully supportive of this policy, as long as it's limited to students and professors who have some relationship with one another, some professional relationship, I was going to be completely supportive of the policy as it was then being developed. She said, "Great. Now I want you to lead this effort."

Reti: Oh, wow. (laughter)

Blumenthal: I agreed. So I ended up leading this discussion henceforth. I was the one who helped craft the final policy which basically prohibits faculty from having a romantic or sexual relationship with their students in their class, or with their graduate students who they supervise, or with any student who is likely, there is a reasonable (I forget the exact wording) reasonable expectation that they will be a student of the faculty member going forward.

Reti: And this is specific to UCSC.

Blumenthal: Specifically to UC-wide.

Reti: UC-wide. This was systemwide.

Blumenthal: So, for example, my having a relationship with Kelly when she was a law student wouldn't be an issue.

Reti: Right. Would not be an issue under this.

Blumenthal: My relationship with the student who I did date would not have been an issue because it was highly unlikely that she would ever be a student of mine again, based upon her major. And the veterinarian's relationship with his wife would not have been an issue. But some of the more egregious cases that you may have heard about over the years would have been issues. I thought it was a very sensible policy, at the end of the day. I helped shepherd it through Academic Council, and Academic Council essentially approved it virtually unanimously. At the end of the day, it wasn't that controversial. I think once I came on board, it was destined to be agreeable.

Then we went to the Academic Assembly. It was an interesting Academic Assembly meeting because, first of all, we did two assembly meetings. The first meeting was just to discuss it. And at that first meeting, I was kind of shocked when a position paper came out from faculty members in feminist studies at Berkeley opposing this policy.

Reti: On what basis?

Blumenthal: Well, to this day, I'm not sure I fully understand. I read their paper and I didn't really understand it. I remember at the assembly meeting I was very frustrated. They gave me this paper and I read it, and I didn't understand it. So I gave it to Alison.

(laughs) This was really bad—I gave it to Alison Galloway and I said, “You’re a woman. Maybe you can understand this.”

Reti: (laughter) Right. It’s genetic.

Blumenthal: I really didn’t get it. And, in fact, that night I brought it home and I showed it to Kelly. Kelly has written a book on feminist legal jurisprudence. And her attitude was this is fuzzifying the line between sexual harassment and consensual relationships. I get that. I get that the way they were framing the issues it wasn’t clearly distinguishing it. But they were opposed to the policy. To this day, I still don’t deeply get it. They were very opposed to the policy.

Reti: And did they have a proposal for an alternate?

Blumenthal: No. They just didn’t want this policy. So we had the assembly meeting; we had the discussion. Over the course of the next month or two, I tried to better understand this position. I still didn’t really understand it. Maybe I’m just not smart enough. But people felt strongly about it at Berkeley.

Reti: Not just the feminist studies department.

Blumenthal: Well once the feminist faculty had written this very strongly-worded letter, I think that the other representatives from Berkeley went along with them. But again, I just felt like it was fuzzifying up sexual harassment and romantic relationships. I thought the issue was two separate issues, and to me they’re pretty clearly different. As I said, a romantic relationship could involve sexual harassment, but it doesn’t have to.

Anyway, so then it came to the assembly for passage. It was an interesting assembly meeting, because there were three items on the whole agenda for that assembly meeting. One was a discussion. This was the discussion meeting for academic freedom. The second

item was romantic relations. And the third item, which we'll come back to, was the revision of senate by-laws, which I was also leading the discussion of. So, I was on for two-thirds of that meeting.

That may have also been the meeting where I was elected formally as vice chair of the senate. I don't remember for sure. But anyway, it was a really interesting discussion at the assembly meeting. The Berkeley contingent at the assembly meeting were uniformly opposed to this policy. The only other opponent of the policy was a guy from UCLA who made an argument—I mean, as people raised questions and made arguments, I was happy to respond to them all. This one, I didn't have a response for. He said—and I'm sorry, I don't remember the exact reference—but he said, “If we were to have such a policy, that would preclude certain great literature and great music in operas.” I think he cited, *Isolde* and some great romantic relationship in literature between a professor and his student. He said, “We wouldn't have that if policies like this were in place.” I was speechless to respond to that. Obviously, I didn't think that was a very good argument. But he was so passionate about what he was saying that I didn't want to burst his bubble, if you will.

Anyway, when it came to a vote, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor of adopting it. Berkeley voted as a block against it and presumably this guy voted against it. But virtually everyone else voted for it, so it passed overwhelmingly. It ultimately went to the regents, where Gayle presented it to the regents. And it was adopted. So it is now adopted as a part of the code of conduct. And I'm glad.

Again, jumping even further ahead, I know that there have been a couple of cases on this campus, since I've been chancellor. And at least in one case, it bubbled over into sexual harassment. That's a whole other story. To me, the sexual harassment pieces of it are far more important. But we had a case on campus of a very consensual relationship which

was also very wrong, and I think went bad. We dealt with it in a way that I thought was firm and yet humane. So I actually think it went okay.

Reti: Great. So this policy proved to be useful in that case.

Blumenthal: It proved to be useful. Absolutely. And I know it's proven to be useful on other campuses as well. Again, I don't know a lot of specifics, because a lot of these things are handled very confidentially. But anyway, I'm proud of what we did there. And I admit to you freely that I didn't come to that point easily.

All right. So that's romantic relationships.

Bylaws—so I've got four more things on that council before I become vice chair. (laughs)

Reti: Bylaws, pension, what else?

Revising the Senate Bylaws

Blumenthal: Reapportionment and lab position.

So, bylaws. Having redone the bylaws for Privilege and Tenure, it was systemwide Privilege and Tenure on how we hold hearings. Having done the revision of the faculty code of conduct, I unfortunately suggested to Gayle at the beginning of her year as chair that maybe we should take a more systematic look at the systemwide senate bylaws. She was enthusiastic and suggested that I was just the ideal person to make this effort. (laughter) It ended up being a two-year effort.

I did this during that year, and then I continued on into my vice chair time, when we finally brought it to a conclusion. Ultimately, we put together a small task force that included Gayle and me and just a couple of other people—it was really small—to go through and make changes. I decided to do what I thought would be the easy part first. It

turned out that that was the harder part that we did first, which was to look at all of the senate committees and their charges. First of all, they were all different and we wanted to make them more uniform in the way that the committees were called out and charged and designed, just in terms of language, making them more uniform. It was really a very hodgepodge thing because the committees were all started at different times. So to the extent that we could, we did this. We consulted with each committee. And as you might imagine, every committee had lots of opinions about their charges.

I wanted to make the charges more uniform. It would be nice, but not a big deal. But what I also wanted to do was make clear, first, the membership of committees. Not all committees had vice chairs. We wanted to make sure we understood why all committees should have chairs and vice chairs. And then, the other thing was a really awkward issue. And that was term limits. We'd had members serving on certain senate committees for ten or twelve years. There was one guy from Berkeley who was really good, so this isn't a criticism at all.

Reti: Really dedicated people.

Blumenthal: Really dedicated, really good, who served on BOARS [Board of Admissions in Relations with Schools], for example, for ten years. Cal Moore. And Cal is a great guy. I think he did just yeoman service. But I think also there's something to be said for having a turnover.

So we carefully reviewed the way we did senate committees to ensure there's a maximum number of terms that someone can serve on a committee. And we limited how often they could be chair of a committee. We did those things in order to ensure constant and healthy turnover within the senate.

All of that took a lot of consultation. It took a lot of work. It was controversial only in the sense that a few committees pushed back on the way we framed their charges. Charges are important to these people, to everyone, I guess. But it wasn't controversial, like the romantic relationship thing. Or to the extent that there were controversies, they were limited to a committee and didn't make their way. But since Gayle was on the task group, and she was the chair of the senate, that carried a lot of weight as well. And so, we finally got that done.

Then we took on everything else within the bylaws. There was a hodgepodge of issues. And boy, there was stuff in there that was so anachronistic. I'll give an example: timeframes. How do you measure time? Well, you say we measure time in seconds or days or whatever. Great. That sounds good. But in fact, in the bylaws, there were many different measures of time. If you actually read the systemwide bylaws, there were some sections that used days, calendar days. Some used weekdays. Some used academic timeframes, such as beginnings or ends of academic terms, days of classes, or the first day of class instruction. In fact, there is no consistent beginning or end of academic terms at campuses of the university.

Reti: Not systemwide, right.

Blumenthal: Some of them used "fifth week of the semester," something like that. It was just all over the place. In some cases, the timeframes that they talked about weren't even unique in the system. And it was more complicated by the fact that since we already had a mixed system, with some campuses on semesters and others on quarters, we had to be cognizant that certain things couldn't be accomplished either in August or September, or at the end of May and the beginning of June. So I made some decisions, like we would

only talk about calendar days. That was the only timeframe allowed. And I just tried to bring some sensible consistency to the bylaws.

There were some other issues as well that were of more substance. But we had to deal with them on a one-by-one basis. But I have to say, that second iteration, though I thought it would be more controversial because we did have to deal with some individual issues, it turned out it was smooth sailing and never generated much controversy. But it took a lot of my time. So at the end of it I said—and I said this in a speech a few years later when I was given the Oliver Johnson Award by the senate—I said that I became convinced at the end of those two years of working on the bylaws that when I die and go to hell, they're going to make me chair of the bylaws committee. (laughter)

Pensions for Medical School Faculty

Another issue was a relatively small issue, but somehow I got involved with this, and I wasn't happy about getting involved with this one. This had to do with a pension for medical school faculty. The issue came up to the Academic Senate because the medical school faculty around the system were very unhappy with how they were treated in the pension system. It took me a long time to understand the issue, in part because of the complicated way in which medical faculty are paid. It was a very divisive issue on council. On the one hand was Larry Pitts, who was then the vice chair of the senate. Larry believed that medical faculty were being treated poorly and that there was an easy solution to fixing the problem. (I'll explain the problem in just a minute.) Yet there were others on the council, particularly the faculty welfare folks, who were adamantly opposed to this. So they set up a subcommittee of council to look into it, which was fine because we had a presentation from Larry, and a presentation from faculty welfare. I really didn't understand it very well at the time. I would have been fine with coming to an

understanding and making a decision, except that one of the people on the task force dropped out, and so Gayle asked me if I would join the task force, which meant not only did I have to do some work, I actually had to come to a point where I understood what was going on. It was actually a good thing, because it gave me an understanding of the medical enterprise of the university in a way that I would not have otherwise come to.

So let me back up and explain the issue. First, let's talk about how medical school faculty are paid. It's complicated. It's astonishingly complicated. The salary of a medical school faculty is the sum of three terms: X plus Y plus Z. And they're really called X plus Y plus Z. The X part of a faculty member's salary is itself the product of two terms. (laughs) I kid you not.

Reti: I'm having algebra anxiety right now. (laughs)

Blumenthal: As well you should. Well, actually let me say it a different way. The X part is the product of two terms. One term is the base salary, the base state-supported salary of a faculty member. So you can understand that. Each faculty member in a medical school has a certain base salary, paid from state funds. That base salary is way below their real take-home salary. So if a surgeon at UCSF earns, I'm making it up, \$300,000 a year, their base state salary might be, I'm guessing, a hundred thousand, or fifty thousand. I don't know. It's way, way less than their salary.

And so what the medical schools do is each department takes this base state salary and they multiply it by a factor that lies between one and two. So nurses might be multiplied by one, and neurosurgeons might be multiplied by 1.9, or 2. And so the X component is this multiplication factor times their base state salary. And that's what X is. The multiplication factor has to be the same for everyone in the department.

Now this multiplicative factor comes—I'm sorry to give you all this—but the multiplicative factor comes from the clinical income that the department generates. So if neurosurgery generates a lot of clinical income, which they do, they can afford to give every member of their faculty a large multiplication factor.

Reti: Clinical income meaning the actual surgeries they're doing?

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: So they actually do get paid more if they do more surgeries.

Blumenthal: Well, no. This goes to everybody in the department, this factor. It's a factor associated with the entire department. So everyone gets the same factor. But the point is, the money, this X component consists of two parts. It consists of the part that's the base state salary, and it also consists of the extra piece you added on by multiplying by this multiplication factor. The added-on piece comes from clinical income from the department. But it's the same percentage added on piece, or the same multiplication factor, for every member in the department. So that's the X component of this.

Then there's the Y component of salary, which is based upon clinical or grant income that an individual faculty member brings in. That's negotiated faculty member by faculty member, so everybody in the department will have a different Y salary. But the money comes either from clinical income or from research grants.

And then there's the Z component, which is not considered a part of their fundamental salary. It's like a bonus that they get every year. If they generate a lot more clinical income than anyone expected, they might get a bonus in their Z salary.

So given a medical school faculty member's salary is X plus Y plus Z, where X is the base salary times a multiplication factor. Sorry to give you all of that. I initially had no understanding of any of that and that's why I was completely so confused.

The reason it's important for pensions is that the pension that a faculty member gets is based only on their X salary. That's the only salary that generates pension in our pension system, and so medical school faculty members felt that they were being disadvantaged, because they weren't eligible for pension on the totality of their salary. Larry had a series of plans, some of which involved extending our UCRS to the entirety of the salary; some of which involved extending it to Y; some of which involved setting up a defined contribution plan. As I recall, Larry had four different scenarios that he was pushing. And faculty welfare folks were pushing back, on the grounds that this was not state money, and therefore shouldn't be subject to the pension. That debate went on and on and on. So when I got thrown into the middle it was somewhat awkward, because I was a little bit at loggerheads with Larry. He and I didn't see completely eye to eye on this. He wanted to be more generous toward medical faculty than I was prepared to be in terms of defined benefits. It was also complicated by the fact that at the time, no one was contributing to the pension system—UC was on pension holiday.

But where we ended up, I thought was a reasonable place. We asked that a defined contribution plan be set up for that portion of all medical school faculty which is above what's covered by UCRS. So they could get benefits, but it just wouldn't be a defined benefit; it would be a defined contribution. That's what ultimately was recommended and I think that's ultimately was put in place.

But it was really complicated. I just explained it to you. But my god, it took me a long time to get to that understanding. I remember having calls with Larry, and having calls with

the guy on Faculty Welfare. I just needed them to explain the basics to me, because I had no idea of the complications of medical education faculty. So anyway, we finally got through that. But that was awkward, and it was particularly awkward because I knew Larry would become the next chair.

So the other small issue, and this is so small I shouldn't even mention it, but I took a certain amount of pride in this. At the end of Viswanathan's year as chair, the issue came up of the annual reapportionment of the Academic Assembly, how seats are allocated among the campuses. And so, they brought it to the council, including some mathematical calculations, and they presented the results to us. I asked the question, "What does this mean and how did you arrive at this way of doing the calculation?" Nobody knew the answer. And in fact, the person who had done the calculation was Maria. She said all she had was an algorithm and she used the same algorithm every year, but she had no idea where it came from.

I said, "If we're going to approve this, it makes sense to me that we understand it." Everyone agreed that we should understand it, but we couldn't hold off on approving it. So Gayle gave me the assignment of researching this and coming back next year with an understanding of reapportionment of the assembly.

So in fact, I let it go. But about a month before this was going to become an issue again, I realized I'd promised I would do this. So I went over to McHenry Library and I delved into the literature on reapportionment and how it's done, and discovered it's a fascinating subject. Absolutely fascinating. And it turns out that—and if you don't mind my talking about this for a few minutes—it turns out that the whole literature, the whole idea, all of the ideas behind this, originated with the new United States. Nobody had ever had to face these kinds of questions until the US came into being. The issue of reapportionment of

Congress was a hot political potato for literally two hundred years and probably should still be today, I don't mean based upon the nasty things that they do in terms of gerrymandering. I mean just in terms of the mathematical way that you decide which states get how many representatives. The reason it's an issue at all is because you don't have fractions of people. So if you have a House of Representatives with 435 members, and you've got 50 states, you've got to find a way to divide them up. It would be easy if you could have fractions, but you can't have fractions.

So it turns out that when the United States began, there were two competing algorithms for doing this. One was called the Hamilton method and one was called the Jefferson method. And surprise, surprise, the Hamilton method benefited populous states, and the Jefferson method benefited less populous, more agrarian states. The difference involved whether you round up or round down as you do these calculations. There were great political battles fought over whether to use the Hamilton method or the Jefferson method. Those battles continued until the early to mid-1800s, like 1830, 1840, when a new method was adopted called the Webster method, named after Senator Webster. The Webster method seems very sensible on the face of it. The Webster method doesn't have you always rounding up or down, but rounding up or down based upon whether or not a fraction is bigger or less than a half. It sounds very sensible and reasonable. And the Webster method was used, for the most part, in the United States for many decades. Every ten years Congress had to decide. But they usually used the Webster method. They did this well into the twentieth century.

Then it was discovered along the way that the Hamilton method, and the Jefferson method, and several of the other methods that had been proposed, had logical inconsistencies associated with them. For example, if you decided to add seats to

Congress, if you increase the size of Congress by a seat or two, you can be in a situation where a state might lose seats as a result of Congress increasing in size. Seems illogical.

Reti: Right. Because you can't have it be more than 435 people.

Blumenthal: Right. But still, you would expect that if there's more seats in Congress, any state, whatever they get, should always increase or stay the same. So there were certain logical inconsistencies. But it was also discovered eventually that the Webster method didn't have those inconsistencies. So the Webster method was adopted until the 1930s when they adopted a new method, the name of which I've forgotten, which is still currently the method that's used. The method that's used now rounds up or down based upon the geometric mean of whether the geometric mean is bigger or less than a half. That's the square root of the product.

That method was analyzed by one of the great mathematicians of the twentieth century, Von Neumann, as part of a National Academy study. They concluded that this new method, whose name I forget—I think of it as the geometric method—was the optimal way of doing reapportionment. So the U.S. Congress adopted it in part because it gave an extra seat to the Democrats in a year when Congress was Democratic. And that's been the method that's used ever since. Ironically, however, subsequently it's been learned and understood that that method is not optimal. The old Webster method is optimal in terms of minimizing the disparity, in other words, how far a state should be from an optimal fractional number. So, in fact, the Webster method is the most appropriate one to use. But the U.S. still continues to use this other method.

Anyway, I wrote all that up. Then I also discussed how parliaments divide up their seats. Some parliaments are elected not by seat, but by percentages. If you get 50 percent of the vote, you're supposed to get 50 percent of the seats. So there's different methods that

various parliaments use, which are variations on what I've just described. So anyway, I wrote all that up, and pointed out that the method that the senate office was using was the Webster method, so it was the correct method. So we were doing the right thing all along, although nobody knew why we were doing the right thing.

So I wrote that up as a little paper. It's in the council agenda. I was very proud of it. And it was really funny, because when that council meeting happened, Dick Atkinson came in for lunch and he had the big, thick council agenda. And he said, "You know, I read the council agenda. There was only one thing in here that I thought was interesting."
(laughter)

Reti: I would not have guessed that at all.

Blumenthal: No, I wouldn't have guessed it at all, either. It was all a complete surprise to me. I'm sure to a political scientist, who knows this stuff, it's not at all surprising, but to me it was. And Gayle is a political scientist. But there's different kinds of political scientists. Anyway, I just thought it was really, really fascinating.

I even remember being in a library with all these books open around me. Bob Meister came in and saw me. He came over and said, "What the hell are you doing?" Using *this* library, in the political science area. Anyway, that was fun. That was just a little fun thing.

UC's Management of the Berkeley, Livermore, and Los Alamos Laboratories

So, let me turn now to the labs, the national labs. Oh my gosh. Where to begin? So during this period of time, all three national labs, Berkeley, Livermore, and Los Alamos, were run by the University of California. UC had run those labs since their inception. Los Alamos started in 1942 or something. But this was a contract with the Department of Energy and around this time, a number of scandals were happening in Los Alamos. You may

remember the Chinese-American guy, Wen Ho Lee, who was accused of giving away secrets to China but who was ultimately cleared of everything.¹⁶³ His reputation and isolation, etcetera, was terribly harmed during that time. It was a black eye on the US that we did that to him.

But there were also other legitimate issues. There were safety issues, a host of safety issues. There were lost discs with classified information. There were accidents. One of the most horrible accidents was one that happened when Larry Pitts was chair. Somebody was using a laser but hadn't asked the people in their labs to wear safety glasses. There was a student in the lab who at a certain point decided to look down the axis of the laser and it burned out one of her eyes. So she became blind in one eye. Ironically, that student had hoped to become a surgeon, which of course she couldn't do, because you need two eyes to be a surgeon. You need depth perception. I remember Larry went out of his way—when she applied to medical school, he really, I think, pulled some strings to get her into medical school. We all felt terrible about that. But there was a whole series of them, and as a result, they fired the lab director at Los Alamos. They brought in a general or an admiral, I forget his name now, to make things right. He was hated by the people there. It became a big issue.

And then meanwhile, our contract for all three labs was running out and there was a real question about whether the Department of Energy would renew any of those. The Department of Energy decided to do a competition for all three labs. So it seemed very bleak that the university would remain the group that runs the national lab.

Reti: And was there any kind of—maybe you're going to get to this—but I know there was a lot of political protest around UC managing those labs, all the way through the 1980s, at least that's what I remember most vividly.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And let me be really honest about that. I was one of the protestors about the national labs. It was always my view, for many, many years, that UC should not manage the labs. Berkeley's a different story, because they don't really do weapons work. But Livermore and Los Alamos do. It was my position that as a university it was inappropriate for us to be designing bombs. That shouldn't be something that we do. I felt quite strongly about it. I never visited the labs as a faculty member. And in fact, when one year it was decided that the annual astronomy meeting for the UC system would take place at Livermore, I refused to attend. I wrote a letter of protest on the grounds that it might be difficult for foreign nationals to attend the meeting and I myself refused to attend. I felt pretty strongly about it.

A couple of years later, Bill Mathews and I wrote a paper on the Rayleigh-Taylor instability when radiation pushes hot gas around. We were applying the idea to active galactic nuclei, but I was at first bemused and then horrified to receive a couple of scores of reprint requests from Livermore and Los Alamos. I wondered if we had just solved the problem of how to make bigger bombs.

The strength of my opposition to UC operating the weapons labs mitigated a little bit over the years, in part because, I knew Claire Max, who was at Livermore.¹⁶⁴ I had a lot of respect for Claire, so I knew some good work was going on there. But I think one of the things that helped at least moderate my position was Bruce Tarter, who became the director of Livermore.¹⁶⁵ Bruce was a few years older than me, but he was an astrophysicist and I knew him as an astrophysicist. I had a lot of respect for Bruce. I ran into Bruce several times and we would sometimes have a discussion about the University of California and whether it should be associated with the labs or not. Bruce, of course, was an advocate for that. I felt he had some good points to make, his points mainly being: don't you want high quality people at the labs doing this national work? Having an

association with UC helps do that. In addition, UC oversees the science of the labs, and it is an important national service on the part of UC to maintain the quality of the science going on there. I thought those were good arguments. I kind of went from being adamantly opposed to more neutral, as a result of my discussion with him, but never in a million years thought that I would ever get involved with the labs. Little did I know.

So when Gail was chair of council, it was clear that the three labs were going to be up for renewal. It was clear to us on council that the senate needed to have a voice in this discussion, which wasn't something that was likely to happen through the natural course of affairs. But since there is a research component to the labs and there are associations with the campuses, we needed a voice.

And then there was the issue that had happened the previous year. Stan Woosley, who's a faculty member here, has worked for many, many years at Livermore, like one day a week, and he does a lot of heavy computing there. I respect that.

I think Stan is a great guy and I think he has done fantastic work. He's a member of the National Academy. I'm very proud of Stan. One day during my first year on council, he showed me a flyer that had just come out at Livermore for joint faculty positions that would be available between the university and the labs. He wanted us to think about whether or not we wanted to go for one of these joint positions. It was a way of getting the labs to pay for new faculty positions at UC. I think Stan was right to want to be aggressive. However, when I saw the flyer, which I had never seen before, I was shocked to discover that the mechanism by which faculty would be hired would involve going through the UC hiring process and a review by the Committee on Academic Personnel, which we always do. But the final decision would be made jointly by the chancellor of the campus and the director of the lab, whether to hire somebody. I was deeply troubled by that. So I brought

the flyer to the next Academic Council meeting and showed it to Vis. Probably I emailed it to him. I don't know what I did, but I made sure Viswanathan saw a copy of it. He was in agreement. So at the council meeting that year, the council took a position that this was unacceptable and that the Academic Senate would not support allowing the directors of the lab to have say over who is or who is not hired as a UC faculty member. That position was unanimous. And ultimately, they backed down on that. So that was my first involvement.

But then the next year, things started heating up, as it was clear the labs were going to go toward being recompeted. So the council decided to form a lab committee, which became known as ACSCONL Academic Council Special Committee on the National Labs. I was appointed chair, which I did for two years. I chaired that committee the years that I was chair and vice chair of the Academic Senate. And so we did a lot as a part of that committee.

In addition, in parallel to this committee's formation (so put that aside for a moment), traditionally, since the chair and vice chair of the senate are also faculty representatives to the regents, and since regents normally get security clearances, it was long ago decided that the chair and vice chair should also get security clearances. We're talking about Q clearances, which is the DOE equivalent of top secret. It's a pretty high clearance. So traditionally, that's what every person did when they became elected vice chair of the senate. So when I was elected vice chair of the senate, Larry or Gail or somebody said to me, right now get your paperwork in to apply for a security clearance. I really hated doing that, because they ask so many intrusive questions about your life. But I did all the paperwork and I put it all in.

Then, just as I started as vice chair, a new option opened. Typically, getting a security clearance took a year. But they had a new mechanism—I guess they'd been doing it for a year or two—where you could go spend three or four days in Albuquerque, New Mexico and they would give you polygraph tests and drug tests. You'd have to talk to a psychiatrist and various other things and then they could expedite your security clearance. They'd put you up in some dingy hotel in Albuquerque. So this was offered to me. But I really didn't want to do this. I mean, first of all, I wasn't all that interested in being all that close to the labs. But even having to do it, I didn't want to go to Albuquerque. So I said no.

And interestingly enough, my application for security clearance never got acted upon while I was vice chair or chair of the senate. In fact, it was finally acted on and approved halfway through the next year, after I returned to Santa Cruz. I think there were two reasons for that. One was because the federal government, during the course of that time, had changed the way or the group or the company or whatever organization did these security clearances. And I got caught in the transition.

The other reason is that I had spent a year in an "I" country: Israel. Israel is on their list of countries to be suspicious of. Because as you know, the US actually imprisoned for a long time a spy, Pollard, from Israel. So Israel was regarded as a suspicious country. So it called for extra scrutiny. They only scrutinized what you'd done over the last ten years in terms of your international travel. But that year in Israel had occurred within ten years, so it fell within that period. So all of those things caused it to extend. And in fact, even then, despite all of the stuff I submitted and all the waiting, they actually had several calls with me and then an in-person interview before the Q clearance was granted. They asked a lot of hard questions. I put down lists of friends in Israel because they asked me. And they said, "How close are you?" I had to describe in great detail how close I was to those people. It was an experience.

Reti: But they didn't go back to your student days at San Diego, or anything like that.

Blumenthal: No, there are only a few things that they go back on more than ten years—crimes, drugs, stuff like that. Anyway, ultimately they granted the security clearance. It was still relevant even then. Because I think I stayed on ACSCOTNL as a member for a year. But even more than that, I didn't mention this yet, but traditionally, the chair and vice chair serve on several of the official university lab committees, not just on the senate lab committee. So when I was vice chair and chair, and then the next year as well, I served as a member of what's called the President's Council, which is the highest level of the oversight committee of the national labs. So I served on the President's Council, but again, mostly without a security clearance.

I also served I think on two of their other committees. One was on science and technology, which I served on for a year and a half. I finally quit because I just couldn't make their meetings. And I think briefly I served on their environmental and health committee. So I served on lots of lab committees, and not having a security clearance was never really an issue. It meant that when I went to the labs, they had to have somebody walk around with me when I was there. And frankly, I didn't want to know any classified information, so it was just fine with me. It just meant a little bit more of a hassle when I went to one of the labs. I hated going to Los Alamos because it's so hard to get to Los Alamos. You have to fly to Albuquerque, rent a car, drive to Santa Fe, stay in a hotel in Santa Fe. Then you have to drive another hour to get to Los Alamos. It's a major pain. It takes a day to get there. You can try to get back on the day of a meeting in the evening. But the problem is, it's a hairy ride to Albuquerque, especially if you get caught in traffic.

Anyway, the scandals had gone on, and then the complaints started coming in about this admiral who was running Los Alamos, and from scientists. So Bob Dynes, who was

president, put together a small group to do an investigation of the allegations. And part way through my year as chair, he asked me if I would be on it, and I said yes. Then I reminded him that I didn't have my security clearance yet. He said, "Well, maybe I should unappoint you then." I said that's fine. That's the only thing I didn't do for lack of a security clearance.

Just for the record, I'll just add now because we're talking about it, I kept my security clearance afterwards, knowing that I was still on the president's council, even after I was off council. And then after I became appointed acting chancellor, I knew the chancellors were all supposed to have security clearances. In fact, in closed session, the regents, when they were appointing Bob Birgeneau chancellor at Berkeley, pushed back really hard because Birgeneau is a Canadian citizen and not eligible for security clearance. And they went through the appointment only after Birgeneau promised to seek American citizenship and a clearance.

So I kept my clearance. When five years were up, I renewed it. Then within a couple of years of renewing it, maybe halfway through my chancellorship, one day the lab called me up and said, "Do you want to keep your clearance?" I said, "I didn't know I had a choice." And they said, "Yeah, you have a choice." So I did a little investigating and discovered that newly appointed chancellors were not being asked to get clearances. So I decided to give up my clearance because it was such a pain. Every time I traveled abroad to a questionable country, like to China, I had to go through special training and jump through a whole bunch of hoops.

Reti: So George, what was the argument for asking chancellors to have a security clearance until recently?

Blumenthal: That's a good question. It's because we have the national labs; we have collaborations with the national labs. And since chancellors, in some sense, oversee the research of our faculty, to the extent that they're involved in classified research at the national labs, in some sense, we have an oversight function. And I guess they had backed off on that. By that time, the labs were no longer run by the university. They were run by an LLC of which the university had a controlling interest. So it started to get more removed.

Reti: Oh, I see.

Blumenthal: Anyway, that's the long, sordid tale of my security clearance. I was happy to give it up and I've never regretted giving up that security clearance. It was such a pain. And I never used it. I actually never used it.

All right, now going back to being vice chair of the senate. So after the lab committee got going, a couple of things started happening. First, the university had just hired a new vice president of lab management and it was Admiral Bob Foley.¹⁶⁶ Foley came in and he was really clear. He said his goal as the vice president was to compete for all three labs and to win all three labs. He said, "Losing is not an option." That was, I guess, fine, but because we now had a senate committee, we wanted to know a lot more about what was going on with the labs. We wanted to know a lot more about how some of the lab fee money was being spent, etcetera. So I tried to get information from the lab management office in general, and from Foley in particular, about the labs. And he was not going to give us that information. To Admiral Foley, the concept of shared governance was an oxymoron. And you can understand that.

Reti: Well, it's not a military concept.

Blumenthal: That's right. And Foley, he wasn't just an admiral; he was a multi-starred admiral. I mean, he was well up there. He had a distinguished record. So he and I butted heads a lot at first. We developed this pattern. I would ask him for something. He would say no. Then I would go to the president. I would literally go to the president and ask the president to tell Foley to give me what I wanted. Dynes would do that. Foley would give it to me. And then we would just rinse and repeat. (laughter)

Finally, Foley came to me one day and said, "Look." He said, "I may be dumb, but I'm not that dumb. I can see this pattern. Let's just agree. I'll give you whatever you want." (laughter)

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: I'd been inviting Foley to come to a meeting of ACSCONL, the lab committee. We met in the evenings. This was a senate committee and we would typically meet like from 7:00 till 10:00 in the evening in Oakland, which was often not easy for the members who weren't otherwise in Oakland, but that's what we did.

Reti: Right. That's a ghastly commute.

Blumenthal: Well, and the problem was, there were people like me who were in council—I had stuff to do during the day. And other people had teaching and stuff.

So I kept inviting Foley to come to these meetings. Foley realized how important the lab committee was going to be, because I was also quite clear with him of my intention to take a vote of the UC faculty on the issue of staying a part of the labs. I'll come back to that in a minute. So Foley came to a meeting once. I think for some reason we held that meeting at Berkeley at a different location than usual. Foley came. He met with us and it was all very pleasant. Then when the meeting was over, he stayed behind, and several other

members stayed behind and we just chatted with him for a few hours. He really enjoyed himself. And lo and behold, he came to the next meeting and the next meeting. And he came to all the rest of the meetings. It soon became clear, he was really having a good time interacting with the faculty. I think he was just as surprised as we were.

Reti: Nice.

Blumenthal: It turned out he's a good guy. We just had to overcome some of his thoughts about shared governance and why—

Reti: You had a culture difference there.

Blumenthal: That's right. But I ended up really liking him, and really respecting him as well.

So meanwhile, back at the ranch, as chair of the lab committee, I kind of got it into my head that if the regents were going to vote on whether or not to seek a contract from DOE, and to submit a proposal and compete for it, that that's something that the faculty should weigh in on.

So I did a little research and discovered that, in fact, there had been two prior votes by the UC-wide faculty. Both were mail ballots, literally snail mail ballots, where every faculty member in the UC system got a ballot in the mail and could mail it in and vote on whether or not to continue our relationship with the labs. I don't remember the exact numbers. We can look them up. But the first such vote was very strongly opposed to continuing our relationship with the labs. That was maybe two contract renewals ago. UC-wide was very opposed to it, but the regents still went forward. The previous one was against renewing the contract, but not by as strong a majority. A slimmer majority of the faculty were opposed. I felt that it was appropriate for us to do a mailed ballot like that. But if you think

about it, it isn't easy to do a mail ballot of 14,000 faculty. And it's expensive. I mean, just putting stamps on the envelopes, much less taking the time to count the ballots and the paper and all that. We didn't have the budget to do it. But fortunately, this was the time when internet voting and internet polling was just coming online. It was still relatively new. I didn't know that much about it. But it turned out Larry knew a lot about it because the UC San Francisco Senate Office had started doing internet polling of the faculty. So they had purchased some product that allowed them to do that. We could have an argument about how secure that was—and I know that's an issue—I mean, this wasn't the super duper securest even then. But they were not thinking about it as a secure thing. They were thinking about it as a poll, like a doodle poll or whatever they'd call it today.

I urged the committee, and we all agreed, that we would do an internet poll of all the UC faculty on whether or not to compete for renewal of the lab contracts. That involved making sure that we provided the faculty with background material, including arguments pro and con, so they knew the issues. We agreed we would use this. San Francisco volunteered to let us use their polling software for free.

And we had to design a poll. So we devoted a meeting or two to designing a poll. Multi-part questions. We were trying to dig in and get a little bit more than just yes or no. So we designed a poll. Then I got it into my head that maybe we should bring in an expert on polling to critique what we had designed. So I somehow found a woman on the Berkeley faculty in political science, who was an expert in polling, and persuaded her to come to one of our meetings and to critique our poll. It was awesome, because she just tore it to pieces. (Reti laughs) No, seriously. I was really impressed because her arguments were very logical. She raised a whole bunch of issues that I had never thought about. I just thought you ask a bunch of questions; you get a bunch of answers. But it isn't so simple. You have to make sure you ask your questions in a way that all possibilities are covered.

You have to ask them in neutral ways. You have to change the order of questions. There's just a lot of stuff you have to do in order to be as fair as possible. I was really, really impressed with her. We basically took all of her suggestions.

So we created this poll and then we sent it out to the UC faculty. Now, as a part of sending it out to the UC faculty, I also made a special effort to reach out to the campuses, to make sure that they knew what was going on. One of the most memorable of those outreach efforts was to Berkeley, where I was invited to attend a meeting of the Berkeley Academic Senate. It's one I'll never forget. It turned out, by chance it was the last meeting that Bob Berdahl attended as chancellor. I got up and I gave a presentation to the senate: what were the issues, what were the arguments pro and con, and how the poll was going to be run. I got a bunch of questions. And then afterwards, (laughs)—she may have asked me a question during the question session, but we didn't get very far down the road, but she certainly came up to me afterwards—was one Berkeley faculty member who was quite well known, Laura Nader, who is actually the sister of Ralph Nader and a well-known anthropologist. And she came up to me and she said, "You have disenfranchised me."

I said, "What do you mean, I've disenfranchised you?"

She said, "I don't own a computer. And so by setting up a voting system in which you have to vote by a computer, you have disenfranchised me."

I said, "Well, I'm sorry. That certainly wasn't our intent. We had every reason for doing it this way to save costs, etcetera. I would be happy to work with you to make sure that somebody can work with you so that your vote is appropriately recorded."

She said, "That's demeaning to have somebody work with me to do that."

So the conversation didn't end well. I found out that the next day she filed a complaint against me and the senate of gender discrimination, on the grounds that women are much less likely to be computer literate than men, and therefore, setting up a vote like this is gender discrimination.

When I found out about that, I was so upset. I even went to the president and told him about it. He thought it was hilarious. Anyway, nothing ever came of it. Nobody ever came and investigated or anything, so far as I can tell.

Anyway, so we proceeded with the vote. It was not as simple as I'd hoped. At one campus, Santa Barbara, for some reason, all of our emails to the campus telling them how to vote went off somewhere into cyberspace and never got to people. And then we tried it again and we got to some people but not others. So Santa Barbara had something in their system that was not letting our stuff get through. Nobody there seemed to be able to figure out what it was. Santa Barbara didn't have an equivalent of ITS at the time. Finally, we did solve it by having the poll go out from the Santa Barbara Senate office, which did work. So we finally got it all done. We did this poll. And we got several thousand responses from faculty, which was a pretty good response rate for a poll.

Then I analyzed the data. and it was kind of funny because it took me a little while to analyze the data because I'd never used Microsoft Excel, but I got the data in a series of Excel files.

Reti: Did you actually have to crunch the data, or did somebody do that for you?

Blumenthal: No, I crunched the data.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: But I'd never done Excel before, so I actually had to sit down and learn Excel. That took me a few days to get good enough with it. I didn't want to use the real files until I was reasonably adept with the system, because I didn't want to screw it up and lose data or something. I made copies and played around with it until I felt comfortable. I didn't find Excel the easiest thing to do. Anyway, I crunched the data. It was hard enough that I even thought about coming back to campus and using a FORTRAN program to do it (Reti laughs) because that I knew how to do. Anyway, I did the Excel thing.

It was really funny because it got a lot of publicity that we were doing this poll. Everybody was interested. Foley was interested because he was scared to death of what the faculty were going to say. The press got wind of it. So I started getting phone calls from the press asking me what the results were. I said, "I can't tell you what the results are because I'm going to release them to the regents and that's when you'll hear about it."

I remember one reporter called me up. He was from an East Bay newspaper and he was very persuasive. He said, "I really need to know. I'm going to press. I want to know what the results are." I kept saying no to him. And he said, "All right. Fine. I get your no. But don't worry. I'm a pretty good reporter. I have other sources. I'll get it from another source."

I said, "Good luck to you" because that was the day that I was generating the final results.

Reti: (laughs) Right. So they weren't out there anywhere.

Blumenthal: So I didn't even know what they were yet. How he was going to find out—
But anyway, the result of the poll was surprising. The faculty who voted supported going forward with the contract renewal because it was already known it was going to be an LLC, that UC would not be the operating agent, but that we would be a controlling factor, or a

controlling majority of the board of directors of the LLC. And it surprised me. By a fairly substantial majority, roughly 3-1 among those expressing an opinion, the faculty UC-wide voted to support it. Every campus voted to support it.

Reti: Even Santa Cruz.

Blumenthal: Even Santa Cruz.

Reti: So if approximately 2,000 faculty members voted, do you know approximately what percentage that was of the total eligible to vote?

Blumenthal: So I think it was closer to 3,300 with a 26 percent response rate from the faculty, if my memory serves me. And I think there were about 14,000 faculty.

Reti: Oh. So it was still not that big a majority of the faculty that voted.

Blumenthal: That's right.

Reti: It was only 3,000, approximately.

Blumenthal: But show me where a majority of the faculty vote.

Reti: Ah. Okay. (laughs)

Blumenthal: There was variations among the campuses, distinct variations, but Santa Cruz was only the second least positive of the campuses. I think Santa Barbara was the least positive. I was surprised. I also had data on the departments of the people who voted. So I analyzed it by humanities versus social science, versus science, versus engineering. And it cut across divisional lines. The humanities people were just as supportive as the other faculty. That did surprise me.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: I also analyzed it by other factors. I analyzed it by gender. There was a very slight gender difference. I think women were slightly less supportive of competing for the labs. I also analyzed it by age. Or by level somehow. But it was quite, generally, across the board. It was a surprise to me.

Reti: Do you have any thoughts about why the vote went the way it did?

Blumenthal: I think times had changed. We did have a comments section in there where people could write some comments if they wanted to. And a lot of the comments basically said they had no interest in the labs whatsoever, but they wanted to be supportive of their colleagues who might have collaborative interests. So I think that may have played a big role in it. Also, this was 2003-2004. And at the time, that was George Bush, wasn't it?

Reti: Yes. I think so.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Yeah, it was.

Blumenthal: Huh. That's interesting. So politics didn't necessarily play a role. The controversies were different. Most of the news about the labs over the previous few years had been about the controversies and the accidents. They were more embarrassing to UC than they were politically an issue.

So anyway, the vote came out the way the vote came out. And I dutifully reported it to the regents. Actually interestingly enough, when the regents voted, the regents voted unanimously, with one exception—one "no" vote. The one "no" vote was interestingly enough the alumni regent from Santa Cruz, Gary Novack, who voted no.¹⁶⁷ Gary voted no, not because of political things or weapons; he voted no because of the opportunity costs, the fact that all of the attention we devote to the labs takes away from attention we should

be devoting to other enterprises within UC. I thought that was a legitimate argument. And it was interesting. They worked on him; everybody worked on him, I mean, other regents, the president, all of them worked on him really hard because they wanted a unanimous vote, and he wouldn't give it to them.

Anyway, that was the lab vote. To me, that was one of the more important things that I did as vice chair. I just felt it was important to give voice to the faculty.

I continued on the president's council for a while after that and on the lab committee, but I think I resigned when I became acting chancellor. And that was that.

Interestingly enough, today UC has just renewed its contract for Livermore again. And presumably Los Alamos is up soon. But anyway, those contracts have come up again. Berkeley tends to not be controversial because Berkeley really does energy work, and it's so closely tied to the Berkeley campus that it's kind of inconceivable to me that somebody else would win that contract. But I would have to say, I was surprised back in 2004 when UC won the Los Alamos contract, which was the first one to come up. Or maybe Berkeley did. But I'm ignoring Berkeley. Los Alamos was before Livermore and UC won that contract. I believe that UC won that contract because UC put in a much better proposal than the Texas group put in, led by Mark Yudof. (chuckles) A lot of the reason it was a better proposal was because of the team that Bob Foley put in place. People like John Byerly, who was really good, and other people in lab management put together a fantastic proposal. I heard that from my friends at DOE, Department of Energy, who told me that basically all else being equal, there was no way this contract would have gone to UC, but the UC proposal was so much better prepared in so many different ways, there was no way they could avoid giving it to UC. They didn't want to.

Reti: They didn't want to because—

Blumenthal: Because of all the scandals.

And then Livermore came shortly thereafter, and again, we won the contract. So UC actually won all three contracts. I would have given 10:1 odds that that couldn't have happened. Again, I credit Foley with really making that work out.

So that's the labs.

One last thing to talk about today is this election to the vice chair/chairship. There's not a lot to say there. At a certain point in the year, I decided I would put my hat in the ring. I discussed this extensively with Kelly since this affected the whole family. But as usual, Kelly was completely ready to support my professional aspirations.

It was kind of a weird situation because I'd not expressed publicly interest in it. It was relatively late that I threw my hat in. I do remember I went to see Gail Binion at a certain point and asked her about that. She was supportive, but she indicated there would be other candidates. I knew who one of them would be. He was somebody else on council who had a lot of interest and experience, much more experience than I did on higher education issues and budget issues. He was the chair at UCLA and he was a good guy. And it turned out that there was another candidate from Santa Barbara.

But it was really awkward because I remember one day I was at home and the senate chair from San Diego called me up. I think he had just found out that I was a candidate. He basically said, "Well, I've already committed to vote for this other guy." But he wanted to ask me a bunch of questions about what I thought. So I actually thought it was likely I wouldn't win.

But the day of the election, was really striking. I made sure I was dressed nicely. I'm always an active participant in these discussions. The guy who was running against me on

council, he said nothing all morning. I thought, my God, why is he doing that? He should show how interested he is.

Anyway, they sent us out of the room. They did their voting, and the council elected me. Then it had to go to the assembly. The assembly votes kind of like the Communist Party presidium votes. There's one candidate by that point. But the real election is at the council level. So that's how I got elected. Nothing particularly fancy.

But I was surprised when the voting actually came, where as it got really close, how much I wanted it. I kind of just cavalierly threw my hat in the ring. But as it got close, I really did want it.

Reti: Because?

Blumenthal: I'm not even sure I can tell you the answer to that. I felt like that was a place where I could make a difference, where I could make some things happen. I think that's why. And I thought it would be interesting. I thought it would be fascinating. And that's what I was looking for in life at that point: Interesting things.

More on Vice Chair and Chair of the Academic Senate, Systemwide

Reti: Today is January 2, 2019. And this is Irene Reti. I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our sixteenth session of our oral history beginning this new year. And today we're going to begin by talking about your time as vice chair and chair of the Academic Senate, systemwide.

Blumenthal: I began my term as vice chair of the senate in fall of 2003. I remember moving up there. Many vice chairs and chairs of the senate get local residences in Oakland, but since I have a home in Los Gatos, it really made sense not to do that. So instead, I got a new car and I commuted. My plan when I first started was that every week

or two I would spend one day a week at Santa Cruz and spend the rest of the time in Oakland. The reality turned out to be that I spent almost no time in Santa Cruz. I think I could count on two hands how many times I came to Santa Cruz during those two years, at least when I came to campus during a regular working day. I did come for special events and special things. But I just really didn't spend time here, much to my surprise. I might add that that was due to a combination of a couple of things. One was a commitment on my part that I was going to do a job and I wanted to do it right. Many chairs and vice chairs do spend a day a week on their campuses, so in a way, I was overdoing it. So that was part of the reason. Secondly, I got really into what I was doing, particularly because Larry Pitts, who was the chair of the senate, really did put a bunch of responsibilities on my shoulders, which I appreciated very much. And it really wasn't traditional for the chair to do that. He was the first vice chair, when he was vice chair, to get significant authority from his chair. So I appreciated him continuing that tradition of one year and I was determined that I would continue that tradition going forward, which was certainly what I had felt I had done at Santa Cruz with Alison. I'll talk more about that later, but that turned out to be more of a challenge than I imagined.

So although I started out with the idea of being on campus one day a week, it really didn't turn out that way. On the other hand, Larry did maintain the one-day-a-week thing because he was a neurosurgeon. He made a decision early on that he would spend Thursdays in San Francisco doing surgery. So every Thursday he was in San Francisco, rain or shine, doing surgeries. And he basically said to me, "If anything comes up on a Thursday, it's yours. Feel free to contact me. Just call my pager and I'll get back to you if there's an issue that comes up."

Larry and I got along really well and we agreed on almost everything, not completely everything, but almost everything. A lot of things were pretty obvious. On the other hand,

I felt that he was the chair and it was my obligation to keep him informed about stuff. So I did take advantage of his offer to call his pager periodically. And what I didn't realize was that when I called him, what would happen is I would call his pager. Then a few minutes later his nurse, or he would call back, is all I knew. And we'd have a conversation. That would be it. It would be no big deal. What I didn't know is that he was usually in surgery at the time. (Reti laughs) So what he would do is when he got a page from me, he would have his nurse take his cell phone, call me back, and hold it up to his ear while he—

Reti: (laughs) I don't want to imagine what he was looking at as he was talking to you.

Blumenthal: He was in somebody's brain or spine. If I had known, of course, I wouldn't have called him. Only at the end of the year did he tell me that. I kind of felt like oh my God, I probably called him up and asked him the most inane questions. (laughter) He had remarkable patience for my telephone calls. But he did assiduously maintain his neurosurgery practice. I was pleased for him that he could do that. And it makes total sense for him that keeping your fingers into neurosurgery was necessary if he planned to return to it, which he did, for which I am particularly grateful. But that's another story we'll get to.

Anyway, I moved in, actually at a time when Larry was away for a few days. He wasn't there on September first, the first day when I started. So I moved into the vice chair's office. Let me give you a little bit of history there. Both offices, the chair and vice chair, are in the Office of the President. A little bit of history is when they built the Office of the President, maybe ten years earlier, prior to that, the president was housed in University Hall in Berkeley. There was a building there that housed the administration of the university system. But they realized they didn't have enough space and it was getting cramped at Berkeley. So they bought land and built this Office of the President, this

twelve-story building. What I didn't know is that it was actually designed to be too small for the operations of the Office of the President. Their thinking at the time was that if they built it a little too small, that would encourage the Office of the President to scale back the employee numbers because everyone couldn't fit in that building. Well, I don't know what happened in the earliest years. But that idea failed because what they did is they ultimately rented space in various other office buildings in downtown Oakland. So the Office of the President ended up being dispersed throughout downtown Oakland.

The other thing that I didn't know was that there was a big fight when they moved into the building. The president was going to be on the twelfth floor. The question was, where would the senate be? And the guy from Santa Barbara, he was the chair of the senate—Duncan Mellenchamp—Duncan fought a great battle to make sure that the senate was located on the same floor as the president and ultimately, obviously, won that battle. So, of course, real estate on the twelfth floor, which was a high-rent district, was hard to come by. But there was room on the floor for a chair, for the vice-chair, and for our ten staff members.

It was interesting moving in, because when I got there I started talking to Maria Bertero-Barceló, who was the executive director. Maria and I had known each other by that time for several years. I knew she was extremely good and she was very, very helpful. She turned out to be a tremendous person to work with during that period. (laughs) But the first day I moved in, she warned me that we weren't allowed to put nails in the walls for our pictures. I'm not sure what I did. I'm not sure I followed that rule. I did hang up some pictures that I brought with me, one of which was the picture taken by Ansel Adams of the base of campus, which was given to me by the Alumni Association because I had been an ex-officio member of the Alumni Association as chair of the senate. So I hung that picture. Maria walked into my office and she looked at it and she frowned and she said,

“Where did you get *that* from?” She kind of looked at me accusingly, almost as though I had stolen it. So I explained it to her. And she said, “Oh.” She said, “It is so funny.” She said, “When Michael Cowan was up here, he had exactly the same picture and he hung it in exactly the same place in his office.”

Reti: (laughs) I love it.

Blumenthal: I told her he almost certainly got it from exactly the same place I did.

I already talked about my first meeting with Dick Atkinson, about the issue of academic freedom. That was one of my first introductions to the Office of the President. This was the last month of Dick Atkinson’s tenure. He was leaving October first and the incoming president, was Bob Dynes, who I really didn’t know very well. But nevertheless, during that first month, I tried to get a handle on the climate of what things were like at the Office of the President. I’d made a decision, fully and enthusiastically endorsed by my wife, that I would dress every day in a jacket and tie. (Reti laughs) She had dragged me along to go out and buy a whole bunch of jackets and ties and shirts and stuff. I didn’t want to be the Santa Cruz weirdo in the Office of the President. So I dressed the part. And I did drive up every day, which was difficult. I had to drop off my kids. I typically had to drop them off in the morning. So it was drop off the kids and then drive to Oakland, which meant that I had to go up in rush hour, which meant it typically took me an hour and a half to get to the Office of the President.

But anyway, I wanted to check out the institution. Back here on campus, my *modus operandi* was to walk around and just talk to people. Some of the best work I did came from conversations I had casually with people. So I thought, what better way to do that than to get up every hour or two and just sort of—I would pick a floor and I would walk around the building, and if somebody wanted to talk or something, that would be great.

Well, it just didn't work that way. When I'd get up and walk around the building, I'd walk around and look at offices and cubicles. And most people's reactions seemed to be along the lines of: who is this strange man, and what harm can he do me?

Reti: Oh, my gosh! (laughter) That's sad.

Blumenthal: That seemed to be the general attitude. It really wasn't a place where you could have casual conversations. That was kind of rough. I could talk to the senate people, and I could talk to the senate staff. They were really a great staff in many ways. And I spent a lot of time talking to Maria, a lot. But it was a very isolating experience, in many ways.

UC President Robert Dynes

Then Bob Dynes came in as president. As I said, I really didn't know him very well. I'd maybe seen him a few times, but the only time I ever talked to him was at a regents' dinner—maybe it was the July regents meeting in 2003. Dynes had already been announced as the new incoming president. He was chancellor in San Diego at the time. And at the regents' dinner that night, I was at Dynes's table, so I made a point of going over to him and introducing myself. I wanted to emphasize that I was also a graduate of UCSD and from the physics department, which he was at. He kind of put me off and said, "Well, I've read your dossier." Just his choice of words really put me off because—dossier? I didn't know I had a dossier. I mean, I guess I knew I had a personnel file on campus, but I didn't know what kind of dossier I had that he might have been reading, although I could imagine that the president of the university would want to know something about the people who could do him harm. So it made sense at some level. But it was kind of intimidating.

But in fact, the reality of Bob Dynes was very different. He and I did hit it off quite well. What I really liked about him—I'll tell you this incident that I think spoke volumes about him—I told you about Dick Atkinson being very controlling of everyone in the Office of the President, and being very formal in the way he worked with staff and everything. So early on in Dynes's tenure, maybe a few weeks into his tenure, we already knew we were facing a huge budget crisis at the university, one of many that we faced over the years. But this year the budget had taken a distinct downturn. Arnold Schwarzenegger was running for governor, or there was the recall of the governor, I guess, is the correct way to say it. There were a lot of things in transition. And it's a little bit hard to describe in words, but on one side of the twelfth floor of the Office of the President, and several of the senior vice presidents, are along one side of the Office of the President. The other side is broken up. There's the regents' office, which occupies some of that space with their staff. There is the Academic Senate, which has a chair and vice chair office, and an office for the director, and the cubicles for the staff. And then past them, were the external relations people, including the vice president, and then beyond them were the press people.

So I was on the opposite side from the president, in the building. But the offices were laid out in such a way that the vice president's office was kind of isolated. It had nothing next to it except cubicles nearby. All of the other offices had other real offices next to them, but for some reason, there was this little corner where the vice chair's office was, and it was isolated from all of the other major offices. So it was kind of an isolated place. And the culture up there, as I think I've indicated before, is that the vice chair really wasn't a person of note during the year in which he or she was vice chair. So it was kind of like the way you would describe the vice president of the United States in certain administrations. I knew that, and that was fine. That was the expectation.

But one day I was sitting in my office, minding my own business, and Bob Dynes walked in. He said, “What are you doing?” I said, “Well I’m actually, interestingly enough, working on a report for the Academic Council of a series of recommendations to you about what we should do about the current budget crisis.”

He said, “Oh, that’s interesting.” So he came in and he sat down at my table. He said, “Let’s talk about it. What are you going to recommend?”

I said, “Well, like any good physicist, I’m writing the paper before I know the answer. (Reti laughs) But there are eight or ten options that we’re considering.”

He said, “Great. Let’s talk about them.” Because obviously, he was thinking about this too and he wanted to hear what the senate was thinking. So we sat there for, I don’t know, maybe an hour and a half. We talked through the various options, and what the pros and cons were.

But unbeknownst to both of us, the president’s office had lost the president. They wanted him and they didn’t know where he was. So they sent out a search party to search the building to find out where the president had gone off to. They searched the entire building, (Reti laughs) I’m serious, from top to bottom. And they didn’t find him. And the reason they didn’t find him was because no one even thought to look in the vice chair’s office, because it was inconceivable that the president would have stopped in to talk to the vice chair. (laughter) It was only on the second go-round, when they were frustrated at their inability to find him on the first go-round, that they actually found him in my office.

Reti: Amazing.

Blumenthal: I think that said something about the culture of the building. And about Bob himself.

Bob did hit the ground running on a number of issues. Most importantly, I think, was that when he came in he immediately approached the new governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger, about agreeing to a compact: an agreement between the university and the governor's office about future funding for the university. Schwarzenegger's response had been, "What's a compact?" Dynes explained it to him, and they did actually come to an agreement, which the university kept but unfortunately, the governor didn't keep throughout his time in office.

Admissions and Comprehensive Review

And then, of course, Bob was hit with admissions issues, partly as a result of Dick Atkinson's changes in the way university did eligibility, but in part because of the advent of a comprehensive review, which was started at Berkeley. So again, just for historical background purposes, when Dick Atkinson was president, one of Dick's major achievements, accomplishments, was to change the way university thought about national testing, the SAT, ACT tests. He kept arguing that the general SAT test was fairly worthless as a test of students. It measured something, but it didn't necessarily measure something that was beneficial to their being a UC student. And he had statistics to prove it. It was far less predictive of success in college than was grade point average or than, at least as was believed at the time, the SAT achievement tests. So he wanted the SAT test changed, and because this was the University of California, he started a national debate and succeeded in getting the SAT folks to change their exam to make it more achievement-oriented and to include a writing section on the exam, which had not been previously the case.

Admissions issues had been a big issue within UC in the national context, but around the same time, Berkeley was instituting, or wanted to institute, and the regents approved it ultimately, comprehensive review. Until then, basically, only objective criteria were

looked at in terms of admissions to the university, things like SAT scores, achievement test scores, grade point average, class rank, things like that, things that could be measured and quantified very easily. And Berkeley wanted, and ultimately the whole university adopted it, to do campus admissions on the basis of a more holistic review of a candidate's file. So we were ultimately in a situation where we did eligibility based on objective criteria, but admissions based upon a more holistic type, or the potential for a more holistic review. In those days, Berkeley was the only campus that did that kind of review. Later on, some campuses joined them. And then ultimately later on still, during Mark Yudof's tenure, the university adopted a basically holistic review as the default option for campus admission. But anyway, that's a story yet to come.

But nevertheless, because comprehensive review was being used at Berkeley, that led to a huge set of controversies that dominated his time in office. Why did it become an issue? Well, the first issue was, is this a good idea? Should the regents allow Berkeley to do such a thing? It was debated. This was the subject that was discussed at the regents meeting when M.R.C. Greenwood had invited me to join her dinner, and where I'd had dinner with her and Ward Connerly. And that's when Ward Connerly had even asked me what I thought of comprehensive review, and whether it violated SP1 and SP2 or Proposition 209, and I said I didn't think it was at all inconsistent.

But, partly because of Ward Connerly, but much more because of John Moores, who was another regent, this became a much bigger issue. John Moores, unlike Ward Connerly, was appointed by a Democrat. I think he was appointed by Gray Davis to the regents. Moores himself was a self-described Democrat, and yet he closely aligned himself with Ward Connerly on admissions issues. And he was very suspicious of comprehensive review. He felt that it was a sneaky way of doing affirmative action without doing affirmative action. So there ranged huge debates over the next couple of years about

whether or not comprehensive review at Berkeley—and frankly, everyone was interested in Berkeley because A, it's Berkeley, and B, because they were leading the way on this—whether or not this lent some racial or ethnic bias to the admission process at UC.

So over the next couple of years, they brought in experts to do the most sophisticated statistical analyses of the admission outcomes at Berkeley. These were presented in various forms to the regents. Some of them I had to study for a while before I understood them and I'm good at statistical stuff. But they did a remarkably good job in showing that, in fact, there really wasn't a racial bias in the admissions in Berkeley. And you could show that by pulling out all of the correlations of all the other factors that went into decision making.

But it was difficult. It was even difficult for Dynes. Because I remember one meeting—I found this hugely funny because they brought in a bunch of experts to brief Dynes. I was invited to the meeting, too, maybe as an afterthought. But I had read the documents beforehand, so I did understand it. They were trying to explain this stuff to Dynes, who's a physicist, who knows this stuff, too. And he was not getting it. So it fell to me. It turns out I played an important role at that meeting. I was the translator because the statistics people were using their own way of formulating the issue and I was translating it into physics language for Dynes. Once I translated, he was fine with it. But it was really kind of funny to be in that role, because I don't think anyone thought that I had any role there at that meeting to begin with.

That issue dominated conversation at the regents for some time. It was not a pretty picture in terms of the discussions. John Moores, when he became chair of the regents, continued to press on this issue and even wrote an article in one of the big eastern magazines—it was an *Atlantic Monthly* or *Forbes* kind of a thing—basically saying that

the University of California was violating the law in California through our admissions process. To her credit particularly, Judy Hopkinson, who was one of the regents, took him on. Judy's a tough, courageous woman, and a woman of principle. She took him on and ultimately the regents passed a resolution which didn't explicitly condemn Moores, but de facto it was played in the press as a kind of censure of Moores. Even though it didn't explicitly censure him for writing an article like that, the resolution did take him to task for being highly irresponsible.

That carried over later on when I dealt with admissions issues. The California Master Plan specifies that UC should take from among the top 12.5 percent of high school graduates in California, that the CSUs should take from the top 33 percent, and that the community colleges should take everyone. And in those days, there was an organization that existed, a state agency called CPEC, the California Post-Secondary Education Commission. It was subsequently eliminated by Jerry Brown 2.0. But in those days, it existed and one of the things that they did every few years, every three, maybe four years, was they did an assessment of how closely the admissions policies of UC and CSU conformed to this Master Plan requirement. Were we indeed taking the top 12.5 percent? Was CSU indeed taking the top third? It was interesting that, at least in those days, CSU was only taking maybe the top 30 percent. They were not taking the requisite numbers. I doubt if they had the budget to do it. There were good reasons and I don't think anyone held them accountable.

But it was traditional for UC as a result of these CPEC studies, to adjust the way we do eligibility every few years, to bring the number to 12.5 percent. This had been done four or five times previously. So it had been done on an ongoing basis every three to four years. The year that I was chair of the senate was a year when the CPEC report came out and we had to consider what to do. I believe we were taking 14 to 15 percent, so we had to, quote,

“toughen up” the eligibility requirements in order to reduce the number to 12.5 percent. Usually that was what happened in most of these intervals—usually UC ended up taking too many.

So BOARS, which is the Board of Admissions in Relations with Schools, came up with a set of new criteria. I think this started when I was vice chair of the senate because BOARS had been working on this for some time when finally it came to me as chair. BOARS came up with a set of proposals—

Let me put a pin in there for a moment. I need to talk about a different topic for a moment to explain what I’m saying. I want to talk for a couple of minutes about BOARS itself, the Board of Admissions in Relations with Schools. BOARS is a senate committee. Just like any other systemwide senate committee, it has representatives from every campus. It has a chair and a vice chair who are in addition to ten representatives from each campus. BOARS is a committee that had membership and leadership that was of long duration. The two previous chairs of BOARS, in fact, the chair of BOARS while I was still vice chair, had served for a number of years in that role as chair of BOARS. They had done a lot of good work. The year I was vice chair of the senate, the vice chair of BOARS was Michael Brown, the current provost of the university.¹⁶⁸ I’d come to know Michael and I came to know that Michael was very unhappy with the workings of BOARS. The reason he was very unhappy with the workings of BOARS was that a typical BOARS meeting would have far more members of the university administration sitting in the room than members of the committee. There were never executive sessions of the committee. And the reports were written by the university administration, not by the committee. They were endorsed by the committee. Michael felt that it was fine to take advantage of the expertise of the Office of the President, but it was inappropriate for decisions to be made with their participation in the decision, or even their presence in the room during the final decision.

This should be a senate product because it's a senate committee. And in that regard, I completely agreed with Michael. It's not that the other chairs were bad. They were good people. They did fantastic work in many regards. I have a lot of respect for them. But they did not control that situation. But Michael was unambiguous in his desire to see that situation change.

So while I was vice chair, that situation continued. Barbara Sawry,¹⁶⁹ who was the chair of BOARS, who was a good person from San Diego and later went on to a very distinguished career at San Diego as vice provost of undergraduate education, Richard Hughey's job—Barbara was the chair, but she was clearly going to leave. That was her intention. Before she left, however, Larry and I had a very awkward meeting with some of the representatives of Student Affairs at the Office of the President, who came to see us. People from Student Affairs and maybe University External Relations came to see us. We had this very awkward meeting in Larry's office where they basically asked us to intervene with the Committee on Committees to ensure that Michael not be chosen as chair of BOARS because of fear about Michael's assertion that his intention was to hold executive sessions of the committee, and to make the committee responsible for decisions that emerged from the committee.

Larry, to his credit, and I certainly agreed with him and went along, basically said no, we believe this is the right thing to do, and furthermore, we're only two votes on the systemwide Committee on Committees. And, of course, we strongly supported Michael becoming chair of the committee, which he did. He became chair the year I became chair of the senate.

Why do I tell you all of this? Now we can go back to the story. When I was vice chair, this committee, BOARS, looked at this issue of eligibility and came up with some

recommendations which they wanted to bring to the assembly. This was near the end of the year. There was only one assembly meeting left. There was a deadline to get their report to the assembly. The deadline was that day, and we had not yet received the report.

Maria and I had talked about it. The report had to go up on the web by midnight, but we didn't really want to wait till midnight. I also wanted to review the report before I agreed to put it on the web. Larry was gone, so Larry left this in my hands. I don't know where Larry was, but he wasn't there. But I was confident that Larry would support me in what I was doing.

So anyway, we were supposed to get it at noon and it didn't come. Maria went and checked with them and they said, no, "No, it will be available in the middle afternoon." And it was all the Admissions people. It wasn't any of the senate people working on the report. Then they came back and said, "Oh, it will be late afternoon." And then late afternoon came and they said, "No, we're still working on it. We'll get it to you maybe at seven o'clock."

So I said to Maria—Maria always stayed until seven or eight at night. I often stayed till seven or eight myself, although she usually stayed later than me—so I said, "Do you want to have dinner with me? I took her out to dinner." I even remember, we had Chinese dinner.

So we came back and the report still wasn't done. It was getting later. Finally, around 7:30 or so, Maria came into my office and she was visibly upset. She said, "They will only give me this report as a pdf file. They will not give me the Word document." Because obviously, you can't change a pdf file, but you can change a Word document.

So I said, "That's unacceptable. Let me go talk to him."

I went down there. Of course, it was only people from the Admissions Office there working in that room, my presumption being that they had gotten approval from Barbara and the committee to write the report for them, which is their business. But I was still representing the senate. They said “No, they were only going to give us the pdf version.” I said, “No. I won’t agree to put it up on the web. We’re going to have to wait till next year to deal with this.”

So they relented, and they gave me the Word document. We’re talking about a 120-page Word document. So I literally stayed there till midnight, as did Maria, because I didn’t know how to put it up on the web, so I needed her for that. I stayed there till midnight going through that document. It was very badly written in places. It didn’t understand the nature of the senate response. It kept talking about BOARS and the senate as though they were the same thing, and they’re not. There was some lack of clarity about the recommendations. I understood what they were recommending but I thought the language was very badly written in places.

So I did a hurry-up job between eight o’clock and midnight to edit that report. A, I’m not the best writer in the world. And B, I’m not the fastest person in the world, either. There was no way I could do credit to what I thought was a very badly written report, but I did the best I could. I changed the report, on my own authority, consulting no one, which probably I shouldn’t have done. But I couldn’t let the report go up there the way it was handed to me. I just couldn’t do it. It was that bad.

Then we put it up on the web, and ultimately it went to the assembly and it passed. Nobody screamed for my hide for having taken this on. But it says something about the culture there that a report of a senate committee could be handed over without anyone on the senate committee there. They may have run it past people on the committee

electronically, I have no idea. But it just didn't leave a very good taste in my mouth in terms of their processes.

This happened at the end of the year. So one of the jobs I had to do at the beginning of the next year was bring it to the regents. That was a little scary. It was a little scary because of John Moores. It was a little scary because I didn't want pushback from some members of the faculty, although the senate and the assembly had endorsed it, so I was on firm footing there, and I thought it was a reasonable set of proposals.

So I arranged to have a meeting with John Moores. I figured he was going to be the biggest person to worry about, so why not? He and I had a meeting and it actually went fairly well. I was shocked by how dismissive he was of what the university was doing but he agreed with some of the specifics of what we were proposing because we were making it tougher to get in, and that's what he wanted. He wanted it to be tougher to get in. So this worked in the direction that he felt good about.

I also reached out to Joanne Kozberg,¹⁷⁰ who was the chair, I think, of the Educational Policy Committee of the regents. I always describe Joanne as the responsible adult among the regents. She always was and she was very good. I had several meetings with her before we brought this to the regents for approval. We went over all the potential pitfalls. And ultimately it went through with relatively little in the way of controversy.

Reti: It's remarkable how long the Master Plan has held sway. That's a 1960 document, right?

Blumenthal: Yes, it is.

Reti: And that 12 and a half percent has persisted over these almost sixty—

Blumenthal: Yeah, I just gave a speech at the 150th anniversary of UC. There was a big celebration of that. I gave the plenary speech on the Master Plan.

Anyway, the other issue that came up during my time as chair of the senate on admissions was a really interesting one. It came from Michael Brown. Michael is an educational psychologist, so he actually knows a lot about testing. In fact, I remember having dinner with him one night during that period of time when I asked him to explain to me, and he did explain to me, all the biases associated with standardized tests, and how they norm these tests, and all the problems associated with norming of these tests. It was really quite eye-opening to me to realize how intrinsically biased some of those tests are.

Anyhow, BOARS looked at the issue of using National Merit Scholarships as a criterion for admissions to UC. To qualify as a national merit scholar, a student first has to achieve a threshold score on the PSAT exam. But there was absolutely no evidence (and no studies) showing that the PSAT was at all predictive of college success. So BOARS recommended that receiving a national merit scholarship should not be a criterion for admission to UC. That ultimately did pass in Council, and although I feared that the administration would have a fit about it, the change was put in place with little or no drama.

Enhancing Transfers from Community Colleges

Okay. Let me mention a few other issues that came up that year. One had to do with transfer between community colleges and four-year universities. I really tried at that time to do something that would make a difference, to enhance transfer. There were a number of things that had been going on. The community colleges had a grant, or funding, for multiple years. It was a program to bring together faculty in disciplines among the three

public segments in California, to try to agree on undergraduate curricula. So I ensured that we actively participated in that, and I went to several of those meetings.

Some of those turned out to be useful. I had a dream, which only a year or two ago actually finally started getting put in place, although even then not to the extent that I hoped, of having some general agreement in a range of fields about what would be a transfer curriculum that would be transferable to any UC campus. That's something I really wanted to see and having those curricular discussions, it seemed to me, was an important first step in getting that to occur.

There was a second thing going on at the time, which I was not supportive of, nor had anyone at UC been supportive of. It was called CAN—I can't remember what it was an acronym of. But it was an effort to have a common course numbering system for all undergraduate courses, certainly in the first and second year, within all three segments of higher education; the theory was that if courses had the same numbers, it should be easy to determine what and how course credit should transfer among the systems. Because if you'd taken Physics 1, and it was the same number at every university, Physics 1 was Physics 1. That was an initiative that had been strongly supported by the legislature, and strongly operated by the CSU system and it was something UC from the outset refused to participate in, partly because of the way it originated, partly because of the way it was administered, which was terribly. From a senate perspective, the main opposition to it, and certainly my main opposition to it, was that a number doesn't tell you content, and that if there is to be seamless transfer of courses, that had to mean that there was content that was universal, and universally agreed upon, and of a universal quality.

Reti: That would be a nightmare, I would think, to try to standardize essentially the curriculum for every course.

Blumenthal: Well, I think in some cases you could try to do some of that, but trying to simplify it all to a number and say if you can get the number right, then you've done it all, is a shorthand that struck me as crazy.

So, CAN was a major state initiative for a number of years. UC, including the president of UC, refused to participate. I think that cost us some goodwill in a variety of quarters. But I do remember that partway through my term as chair, I got a call from several people encouraging me strongly to send representatives from UC to the next CAN meeting, because they were really trying to get this moving forward. But I knew that CAN was already an utter failure. They had not, even with in their own standards, numbered a course for several years. I was completely mistrustful of their process, so I refused. I did consult with government relations people at UCOP before refusing. But at the end, I just refused.

And somewhat to my interesting surprise a few months later, one day the chancellor of the CSU system announced one day that CAN was no longer, that he was eliminating it. What even shocked me more was that the leadership of his systemwide senate had no idea that was happening. I think the announcement came out on a day I was meeting with the systemwide CSU leaders. They had no idea this was coming. I was shocked. I was shocked that they didn't know it was coming and didn't have a voice in the decision, and I was shocked that they weren't upset that they didn't know it was coming. They were only shocked in that they were supporting it one day and suddenly it no longer existed.

I think it illustrated something that I observed, which was that in the three systems at the time—it doesn't mean it's true today—I think the leadership of all three systems in the senate was extremely good. They were very good and dedicated people. The community college senate leadership was extremely good and extremely strong and extremely

effective. In fact, the woman who was the chair of their systemwide senate later went on to become a dean at one of the community college campuses. The CSU senate leadership—although they were very nice and they were very committed and I think they were very smart, they didn't come from a culture of being willing to take responsibility for exerting their own senatorial views distinct from that of the chancellor of their system. They do have an academic senate and officially their academic senate has authority over curricular issues. But de facto, they're completely dependent on the administration there in many cases, and in many cases that's true on the campus level as well.

Again, jumping ahead many, many years later, just a couple of years ago, I chaired a WASC review of Sacramento State University. I met with the faculty leadership. I also met with the senate leadership. And in that review, I was most critical of the senate leadership, because I felt that they weren't willing to take the responsibility for things that I thought that they, as senate leaders, should do. For me, that was the biggest failing of the institution. I thought the president was doing a great job. And in fact, he *wanted* the senate to take on more leadership. It was crazy, but that's the way it was.

I think part of the problem at CSU stems from their union issues. Their faculty are unionized and the union includes not just regular ladder-rank faculty, but includes their equivalent of lecturers. They're all one big union. I think that the boundaries between the academic senate and the union is fuzzy at the CSUs. I think that that detracts from their effectiveness as a senate because it's too easy for an administrator to simply dismiss them and say, "These are just union issues." Because the senate treats them as union issues. Anyway, though they were wonderful people, I found that the leadership at CSU wasn't as effective.

SIGETC—Science Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum

Why do I say all of this? It's because I wanted to push a couple of initiatives that had emerged the previous year when Larry was the chair of ICAS, the Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates. I make no claim of credit for these ideas. They weren't my ideas. I don't know who originated them, but to my mind, Larry was the one who really pushed them. One of these is something called SIGETC. Don't you love these acronyms?

Reti: (laughs) It sounds like a strange board game or something.

Blumenthal: Well, IGETC, which was already in existence, was something called Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum. Basically, IGETSI was a set of courses that any student at a community college could take, and if they took those courses, then they would automatically satisfy upon transfer the general education requirements of the campus to which they were transferring, either in the UC or CSU system. Because otherwise, you know, Santa Cruz has different GE requirements than Berkeley, than Davis, than Irvine, etcetera and there would be no way to prepare for all of those if you didn't know where you were transferring to. So by basically putting it under one umbrella and saying the campus will waive their general education requirement if you've satisfied IGETC, is a way of making it plausible for students to be able to transfer. IGETC was quite successful at UC. Most transfer students to UC satisfied their GE through IGETC. It was a very good system.

SIGETC was an effort to loosen the requirements slightly for science majors, or for STEM majors. The concern was that for certain majors, particularly in engineering, and in certain STEM fields, the course requirements at the freshman and junior level were so extensive that it was virtually impossible for a student to be able to satisfy the IGETC requirements before they transferred. So SIGETC was an effort for STEM students, to

allow those students to take two of the IGETC courses after they had transferred, and yet still have it count as being their general education requirement. That was an idea that preceded my being chair of the senate. Larry was pushing it, but nothing really had happened. But when I became chair of the senate and as a member of ICAS, I pushed it. I even personally wrote the legislation that enabled SIGETC. I actually wrote it myself. It had to go through BOARS, and then went through the council, and then went through the assembly and was enacted. And my hope is that it has proven to be helpful to people.

The other transfer initiative that I worked on had a similar motivation to SIGETC in advance transfer. It had to do with the fact that different campuses had different requirements for transfer for the majors. In some cases, those differences were minimal. In some cases, there were major differences. For example—at least at the time, it was the case. I don't know if it's true today—but at the time, half of the chemistry departments in UC required organic chemistry to be taken as a lower-division course and half of the departments had organic chemistry as an upper-division course to be taken as a junior or senior. Organic chemistry is one of the more challenging classes and apparently there was a real lack of consensus in the field on this subject: those campuses that did it one way felt strongly about it, just as did campuses that did it the other way. I had no opinion on the subject myself. This is observation. But the point was that that seemed to preclude the immediate likelihood of having all the chemistry departments agree on what should be the undergraduate curriculum, which, by the way, they've now done. So, I don't even know how organic has been resolved. But this is fifteen years later.

Anyway, so the idea was: what if you're questioning whether a course could be counted toward a major, or whether a series of courses could be counted toward a major when taken at a community college? Because it seemed impossible to get all ten UC campuses to agree, we came up with a rule, which was that if four campuses accepted that course,

or a series of courses, for the major, then by default, any campus that didn't explicitly *exclude* that course, it would be acceptable at that campus as well. So, a campus could always say no, but it had to actively say no in advance. And if a campus remained silent on whether a certain chemistry course counted toward the major, then it could possibly count. If four other UC campuses accepted that course, then that campus by default had to accept the course.

The University of California: One System or Ten Separate Campuses?

Reti: Mm hmm. So can I ask you a meta-philosophical question?

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: So the University of California now has these ten campuses. I know there's always been a tension around: are we one UC or ten campuses? I see that some of these issues you're discussing really illustrate this tension. Based on your experience being the chair and vice chair, what was your sense at the time you were there of where on that continuum we were?

Blumenthal: It's a really interesting question. First, let me step back even a little bit further and say that speaking for the university as a whole, or the president, or the regents of the university—as I see it, the university has oscillated over the years between two different points of view—one point of view being that we are one university who takes advantage of the power and promise of ten campuses. We're really one university with ten manifestations. The other extreme is that we are a loose confederation of ten independent campuses, all floating on their own bottoms, and loosely confederated because we live under one Board of Regents. I would have said that Bob Dynes was an advocate of the one university concept, and a very strong advocate for that. He used the phrase “power and promise of ten.” That came from his era.

He was replaced by Mark Yudof.¹⁷¹ Mark Yudof had been president of the University of Texas system, and was very much a proponent of the other perspective, upon his arrival—that it was a loose confederation of ten campuses. I had many conversations with Mark Yudof on this subject and tried very hard to change his mind and change his viewpoint.

Reti: So you would lean more towards the power of ten perspective?

Blumenthal: Yes. Oh, very much so. Mark was very resistant, but Mark evolved over time. The Mark Yudof that left office was very different from the Mark Yudof who assumed office. I think he was much more receptive to the “power and promise of ten” kind of concept, although I was very careful to never use “power of ten” in his presence. That would not have gone over well.

President Janet Napolitano, I think, is intrinsically much more a “power of ten” kind of president.¹⁷² I think she’s actually used those words, but she’s much more politically astute about not wanting to throw that in people’s faces. She does face a lot of chancellors who very much are proponents of the other point of view. So I’d say she’s a moderated version of the power of ten.

The senate, generally speaking, has always been a proponent of the power of ten, much more so than any of the presidents. There are exceptions, and I can cite examples of where the senate has taken different viewpoints. Two prime examples from more recent years are the controversy in San Francisco about whether or not clinical faculty should be given membership in the Academic Senate. They wanted to make that decision themselves. Of course, the systemwide senate prevented that. And then the even more recent issue, which is still kind of ongoing a little bit, of whether or not Berkeley should be allowed to ask for letters of recommendation for admission to the university. Our normal UC application

does not include letters of recommendation. And Berkeley, a couple of years ago, decided that they wanted to have letters of recommendation.

Reti: At the undergraduate level?

Blumenthal: At the undergraduate level have them be one of the inputs to their holistic review. This was strongly resisted by the system, and ultimately by both the president and the regents. Ultimately, there was a compromise made, whereby Berkeley could use it only for close cases to break a tie, so to speak, and could only request those letters under those specified circumstances. I know there have been questions about whether or not Berkeley is following that rule or not. But that was again an example where Berkeley wanted to go a very different way from the rest of the system. And in fact, it was one of the reasons I think that the proposals for ten separate boards of regents originated at Berkeley, because they wanted to be largely independent from the politics of the rest of the system.

Blumenthal: Did that answer your question?

Reti: That's great. Oral history is a great medium for talking about these deeper questions sometimes: what does this actually mean? What's really going on?

Blumenthal: Yeah, as I say, the senate, generally speaking, though, has been much more supportive of the one university concept. But I believed in it. I came from a smaller campus that benefited from being a part of a family of campuses. We had our big brothers and sisters who had some obligation to help us along in our early years.

Reti: Certainly there are those who have said that Santa Cruz would never have survived if it hadn't been part of the larger UC, but that's probably a whole other discussion.

Blumenthal: So let me just quickly finish this thing about the majors. I thought this was going to be super controversial. But again, I brought it to council; I brought it to BOARS;

I brought it to the assembly. Everybody approved it. I again wrote the legislation myself. It was really hard to write, really hard to write, because it's complicated when you get down to nitty-gritties. But I did it and it passed the assembly. However, unlike SIGETC, which I think has helped a bunch of students, the university never advertised this thing about four campuses, then all campuses. And as a result, it wasn't really used very much, if at all. It was kind of hidden from view.

And while I'm on the subject of transfer, one other major thing that—God, I can't believe this was fourteen years ago that I was doing this—it had to do with ASSIST. Do you know what ASSIST is? ASSIST, which again is an acronym, is a publicly available computer database of all courses at community colleges, and a listing of which campuses they transfer to and what they can transfer for. It's a humongous database that needs to be constantly updated. Even when I was there as vice chair of the senate, ASSIST did exist. You could go on ASSIST. And of course, if you think about it, 123 community colleges with many departments and gazillions of courses, and then ten UC campuses trying to figure out which ones go where, or transfer to where, was really hard. Then there are the twenty-three CSU's, although they did get their act together through legislation— Anyway, I felt at the time that ASSIST needed to be upgraded. So I made it one of my missions, even though it wasn't the senate's responsibility, to persuade the people in power to upgrade ASSIST.

Reti: You mean in terms of the software?

Blumenthal: In terms of the usability. It was very difficult to use. This was just as smartphones were coming in. I felt that this should be an app on a smartphone, and that it could even be personalized, so that if you're a student at a community college, you should be able to enter your student ID and it should pop up and say: here are the courses

you've taken: these courses transfer to these places. What are you going to major in? Are you going to major in economics? To go to Berkeley, you need to take these courses. To go to Santa Cruz, you need to take those courses, etcetera. I kept arguing that this is just a computer program. It is not hard to put this all together and make it very accessible to students. They kept promising and promising. It was going to be upgrade after new upgrade of ASSIST. They've just upgraded ASSIST again. And I don't know now, but maybe they've finally done it. It's now so easy to build an app for a smartphone. It would be kind of dumb if they haven't done it by now. But I was trying to push them to do this fifteen years ago because it just felt like that was the way to make sure that the information was available for students, just make it seamless and make it personalized. But again, I had no control. This was not a senate issue, so I had no control over that. It just seemed so obvious to me.

Research Funding Restrictions

Research funding restrictions: this issue came up for the first time when I was chair of the senate and it's come up since then as well. This was an issue that was really well analyzed, because Steve Thorsett, who I think was then vice-chair of the systemwide Committee on Research, thought this through. Steve was always very clear about when he thinks through issues and he really briefed me up on this issue and made sure I was aware of all of the implications. But ultimately, I had to bear the brunt of the issue. What is the issue? The issue is whether or not the university had any business limiting the funding that a researcher could get, based upon considerations other than quality of research. In particular, the primo example is tobacco company funding of research at the university. There are other examples you can think of, but tobacco funding is the obvious controversial example. That issue inevitably came up before the regents, and before the Academic Council. I was firmly of the belief, and remain firmly of the belief, that the

university has no business interjecting ourselves into the funding of research as long as—you know, if it comes from the Mafia, then that's one thing—but as long as the source of funding is a perfectly legal source of funding, then it seems to me that the university has no business imposing restrictions on researchers in terms of where they can seek funding. This is an interference, in my view, of academic freedom.

Reti: It would be a very slippery slope.

Blumenthal: Right. Well, that's my belief but others hold strong contrary views. But the issue very much came up, and it put me at loggerheads with the vice chair of the Committee on Planning and Budget, Stanton Glantz, who's a faculty member at UCSF and has been the leading US figure opposing smoking. Stan is quite well known on that. He's now controversial because of #metoo issues. But leave aside that stuff, he's accomplished a lot in terms of the work he's done with regard to the bias and lack of transparency in tobacco companies in terms of the research that they've tried to suppress. I give him a lot of credit for the work that he's done on that. On the other hand, he was a strong advocate for the university banning tobacco companies from funding research at UC. That put him and me at odds on the issue, and frankly, it also put him largely at odds with most of the senate.

It was really awkward, because this issue was clearly going to be getting hotter and hotter. We had begun a senate newsletter that went out to all faculty at UC on a regular basis. I decided that as chair of the senate, I needed to either write, or have written, a summary of the issue to be distributed to all the faculty at UC. But I was such an advocate for one position that I felt that even though I could write the article as chair, I had an obligation to be fair and give voice to everyone.

I approached Stan, who I always had a good relationship with. I said to him, “Look, I’m going to write this article, but if you give me some prose that expresses the position that you take, I will include it in the article. I want you to have the best possible opportunity to have your position represented before the senate.”

He agreed to do it. It took a while to get it. I remember having to wait and wait, and bug him to get it. He finally came to see me and we had a very tense discussion because he gave me some text and he said I could use it in this article, as long as I didn’t change a word of it, and left it absolutely pristine, the way it was. First of all, it was too long. But secondly, I felt like that really wasn’t the nature of what I’d asked him for. I had every intention of being true to his arguments, but if it was going to be my article, it was going to be in my voice. At the end of the day, I couldn’t accept that, so I ended up writing the article. I essentially used it to frame the ideas in the article, but I didn’t attribute it to him, because that’s not what he wanted. I used my own voice. I really went out of my way to try to be fair to the point of view that I disagreed with on this one. But it really made me kind of bitter that such a simple request, I was trying to be fair, was met with such recalcitrance.

The issue went away. It ultimately didn’t have legs. It didn’t get to the regents, or if it did, it got short shrift at the regents. But the issue did come back some years later. By then, I was chancellor here. The issue did come back to the regents. It came back focused not just on research funding restrictions, but specifically it was focused on tobacco. So it was all about tobacco, per se, not just general restriction policy. There was a lot of lobbying, as you might imagine, from various organizations. Ultimately the regents chose a solution, which I found semi-satisfactory at best, which was that they delegated to the chancellors the requirement that the chancellors personally review all funding requests for tobacco funding. I don’t think that that’s an appropriate thing for chancellors to do. I will quickly

add that there is no tobacco funding on the Santa Cruz campus, nor has there been any at least since the early 2000s. For us, it just isn't an issue. But the last thing I would ever do is tell someone that I was going to restrict their funding. I think it's inappropriate for that to happen at any campus, and I think it's also inappropriate to put this extra layer of approval in a process. But that's what the regents did. And you know, I work for the regents; the regents don't work for me. That's what the University of California's current policy is.

Seeking Support for UC Graduate Education

Oh, and then I had this cool idea when I was up there. One of the real frustrations of the senate for many, many years, was the lack (and it continues to this day, I might add), is the lack of understanding in the legislature of the role of graduate education. Very often the only thing that matters to legislators is undergraduates. But we all know why graduate education is important to California, and how crucial it is. Now graduate education's funded at the same rate as undergraduate education and sometimes in more recent years, graduate education enrollment isn't even funded at all.

Reti: By state money?

Blumenthal: By state money. It happened for several years consecutively because of the infinite wisdom of our legislators. In fact, Assemblymember Ting said to me in a conversation I had with him, "Your graduate students are already funded because we give you money to hire TAs." That's not funding their education. That's funding the job they do.

Graduate education is important. I had no outsized view of my ability to affect what went on in Sacramento in a serious way, but I had this kind of crazy idea that I thought was a good idea. It is possible for the legislature to pass something called a concurrent

resolution, which is basically a resolution of both houses, which states some principle but doesn't have legislative force. I thought, what if we were to get the legislature to pass a concurrent resolution supporting graduate education at the University of California? I tried that out on people in the senate and they loved it. So I started trying it out on a few people at the Office of the President, and I got some generally positive feedback, including from the president.

Then I tried it out on government relations folks, which hated it. And Steve Arditti who was the head of government relations in Sacramento, he was a great politician.¹⁷³ But I'd been warned that Steve was not a friend of the senate. I mean, Steve did many good things, but he knew how to put people off until they went away. Steve was not enthusiastic about this.

Reti: Because the legislature wasn't in favor of it?

Blumenthal: It seemed to him a waste of time. I was asking for symbolic victory.

So I went to some legislators myself and I persuaded them to support such a resolution. I was having trouble finding the right person to introduce it, but I was getting some support for the idea. I went so far as to ask both the council and the Academic Assembly to endorse doing a concurrent resolution, which they both unanimously endorsed. I pushed it very hard. I did not get it done. I think it was an impossibility without the active support of government relations. But at the end of the day, it's on me. It was my idea and maybe I should have pushed it harder in Sacramento myself. But again, I had a limited amount of time there, and a limited number of people I knew. But still, I thought it was a good idea.

Reti: Doesn't the Master Plan charge UC with graduate education?

Blumenthal: Of course.

Reti: So isn't that a codified policy or statement?

Blumenthal: It's a statement. It's a principled statement, yes. But that doesn't correspond necessarily to appropriations.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: So a few years ago, the year that the legislature told us to take five thousand undergraduate students, and paid for only half of those five thousand students, that year also we, as a university, decided we had to take, I forget the number, something on the order of an additional thousand or fifteen hundred graduate students because we needed TAs to teach those undergraduates. But we got no money for them.

Reti: Okay. Well, there's a lot we'll have to talk about on that. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So another issue that came up, and I can dispatch this one fairly quickly, was one day I'm reading the paper and there was an article about how several major colleges were offering academic credit for playing football. (Reti laughs) Among the colleges that they listed was Berkeley. Now normally, as chair of the systemwide senate, it isn't my role to interject my nose into Berkeley's business, but I figured that since the authority to give credit lies with the Academic Senate, even if we all agree this is a Berkeley decision, I knew I was going to get inquiries about this. So I decided I would make some inquiries. I talked to some folks at Berkeley to find out what the story was there, and indeed, it was true. Berkeley did give academic credit, including grades, for playing football, basically. You could only get a limited number of credits—it might have been two or three—but you could get credits. And the students who got those credits, of course got As, and that brought up their GPAs, which helped them stay eligible.

I was concerned that this was going to be a scandal in the making, so I called all of the campuses and tried to find out if they had policies similar to Berkeley's. It was really interesting. Berkeley was the only campus that did this. In fact, when I talked to folks at UCLA, they were furious and incensed that Berkeley did this. (laughter)

It was quite interesting. I felt like I had uncovered a boiling pot, or opened Pandora's box or something. But at least I was prepared for the questions that I might get. It turned out I never got any questions on the subject. It turned out not to be a big issue, but I thought it was an interesting one.

All right. I've got to talk about two issues that are more important issues. I want to talk about UC Merced. But I don't think I can talk about Merced before I talk about Cliff.

Cliff Brunk

So the person who was elected to be the vice chair of the senate when I became chair of the senate was a biologist from UCLA by the name of Cliff Brunk. I'd first met Cliff when I was the committee chair of UCP&T. I attended some meeting of all of the committee chairs and because Br is next to Bl in the alphabet, we had sat next to each other. I found him to be a very friendly guy who had done a lot of systemwide senate service on a variety of committees. I was quite impressed by him, and he was a very personable guy. That was certainly my impression of him. He became the chair of the Los Angeles Division of the senate the year Larry Pitts was chair of the senate. Cliff was on council and I got to know him better. I would say for certainly the first half of the year, maybe the first two-thirds of the year, he seemed to be a good and productive member of the Academic Council.

Things decayed a little bit by the end of the year. I remember one conversation where Larry and he were at loggerheads with one another, furious with one another about some issue. That was near the end of Larry's term.

But the bottom line was, there were a bunch of candidates for vice chair of the senate. I think Larry and I made a mistake. There were, I think, four candidates. We had a clear favorite amongst them, both Larry and I. That was the chair of the division at Davis. Larry's view is generally that as chair he felt that he should stay out of the politics of the council. He should let people vote their conscience, without being led by him. So I tried to adopt his more standoffish approach. Frankly, I now think it was a mistake. I really now regret that I didn't more actively intervene. I really wasn't aware of how Cliff would be. He wasn't my first choice and I really wish I had more actively lobbied for my first choice. The only person I gave a clear preference to was Alison [Galloway]. But Alison and I were pretty close. Alison, I think, would have come to the same conclusion, anyway.

The bottom line was that Cliff was elected vice chair of the senate. I was determined to do unto Cliff as Larry had done unto me. That proved unbelievably difficult. I get along with most people in this world, and most people I work with. It is rare that I don't get along with someone. Cliff falls into that category. That aspect of my year as chair was very, very difficult.

It was so bad that Kelly and I had a standard joke during that year, during the year I was chair. The standard joke was when I would come home—and I'd usually get home around eight o'clock at night—the first thing she would always ask me for is: what is the Cliff story of the day? Because there almost always was a Cliff story of the day.

Anyway, the first day when I became chair of the senate, I came to the office. I guess I had moved my stuff into the chair's office. There was a very nice note from Larry wishing me well, with a list of a few pieces of unfinished business, and just to remind me of stuff that needed to get done going forward. He promised to stay away, although I would have been fine if Larry had come back for periodic visits, and to keep track of things. But Larry was

determined to stay away, which was probably the right thing to do for his own sanity. But I regarded him more as a friend than as a potential problem.

The first day in the office, that Cliff was there, I don't remember if that was the very first day, but it was the first day I saw him, I still remember this. I came there and I got to the office and Maria came to see me and said, "You're going to have to talk to Cliff." I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "He's going around telling everyone he wants to get the university to get the governor to appoint him to be a regent. I said, "You're kidding me." She said, "No. He's already talked to the president and to the provost about this." I said, "Before I came in?" She said, yeah. I used to come in at nine o'clock. Never earlier. And most people got there at eight. I couldn't believe it.

So I went to talk to Cliff. He said, "Who else knows more about the university than I do? I've been a faculty member for," you know, forty years or whatever it is. "I know the university well. I'd be a great regent!"

I said, "But you're a faculty representative to the regents." He said, yeah. I said, "This would be a conflict of interest if you were appointed a regent. You couldn't remain the vice chair of the senate." He didn't buy that. I said, "Of course that's true."

We had this big argument about whether that was possible. And I said, "And furthermore, Cliff, you're losing your credibility. You can't be going around talking like this. You'll lose all credibility with other constituencies, including members of the senate." I really tried to impress upon him that it was important for him to back off from this.

Every month I always had lunch with Ellen Switkes. She's Gene Switzkes' wife. She was then the associate vice president of academic affairs for personnel stuff. Anyway, every month I'd have lunch with her. We were going off to lunch and Cliff starts to talk to her about this idea of his. I couldn't believe it. He couldn't shut up. So finally I said, "Well you

know, Cliff and I talked about his idea this morning, and I really encouraged him to back off from this. I thought this was not a good idea.”

Ellen, God bless her soul, said to Cliff, “You know, it would be really wise for you to listen to George on this one.” (laughs) And he just didn’t get it. That was day one.

He was a complete wild card. He had crazy ideas. He was not helpful. I tried to give him stuff to do. I remember one day, some report came out. I don’t even remember what it was. But one day this big, 150-page report came out on something, from somewhere. I don’t know if it was a legislative report, or if it was a senate report, or if it was an administrative task force report. It wasn’t something that I could have the time to read right away, but I felt it was important that I have an idea what was in there. So I asked him if he would read the report and give me a briefing on what was in the report. Basically he said no, he couldn’t do that. He couldn’t read long documents anymore. (Reti laughs) I couldn’t believe it. I said, “You’re going to be the chair of the senate and you can’t read documents?”

It was really crazy. I tried hard to get along with Cliff. I continued to invite him to every meeting I had with the president or the provost or anyone. I always included him. I felt it was my institutional obligation to do so, even though I hated having him there. I didn’t restrict his ability to speak at regents meetings, although he said some really stupid things at regents meetings. I tried to be honest with him, but it was hugely frustrating. I tried to put him out of my mind to the greatest extent possible.

And it became really awkward for the Academic Council, especially near the end. Council didn’t realize what Cliff was. They certainly didn’t understand how poorly Cliff and I got along. Their presumption was that as chair and vice chair, we would get along very well. But some issues came up, which I’ll describe in a few minutes, on which we very clearly

and explicitly took opposite sides. It put the council in a horrific position having to choose between the position of the chair of the senate and the position of the vice chair of the senate.

So it was really bad. One of the best things about my term ending was that I would no longer be in daily contact with Cliff.

UC Merced

Blumenthal: So anyway, the issue that I was interested in that year had to do with UC Merced. Merced had just started up as a campus. Its first chancellor was Carol Tomlinson-Keasey.¹⁷⁴ Its EVC was David Ashley. They'd hired some faculty, etcetera. But Merced was still governed by the systemwide senate.

So let me back up for a second. What they did with Merced was not very different than what they did with Santa Cruz or other new campuses back in the sixties. A campus, when it starts, it has a chancellor; it has senior administrators. But its faculty only start when the campus opens. But there are policies to be set; there are educational requirements to be put in place; there are senate bylaws to be written; there are personnel, academic personnel decisions to be made that require senate consultation. How do you do that if there's no faculty there to do it? Well, the way you do that is, since there is only one Academic Senate, you appoint members of the systemwide senate, or people from around the system, to take on those roles for the nascent Merced campus.

Reti: Was that done for Santa Cruz?

Blumenthal: I believe so.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: I don't know the details of it, but I believe it was the case, although I think quickly Santa Cruz took over. But I believe that was the case. The original bylaws of Santa Cruz were virtually identical to the senate bylaws of Berkeley.

Anyway, there had been a group that was constituted as a coordinating committee that oversaw Merced, and served as the Academic Senate of Merced. But there were also some other systemwide committees that were doing specific things for Merced, most important of which, there was a CAP, Committee on Academic Personnel, for Merced. I remember Geoff Mason in the math department at UCSC, was on the Merced CAP Committee.

So there were a few committees. There was probably a Planning and Budget Committee as well. I don't remember the specifics. But while I served as vice chair and chair, I was also a member of this supervisory oversight committee for Merced.

But Merced was already in operation and by that time had fair core of faculty. It had a division chair; they didn't have a division of the senate yet, but they had a chair. I'd made the decision to invite him to attend council meetings as a non-voting member of council because I knew someday there would be a voting member of council from Merced and I really wanted to get the division up and running as soon as possible at Merced. So I made that one of my goals for my year as chair of the senate, to get it going, and to get it going on the right foot.

Cliff, I might add, was a very strong proponent of Merced. He loved Merced. He had served on a number of these committees for Merced. He even told me that his plan was that when his term as chair of the senate ended, he wanted to transfer his faculty position to Merced. He was so proud of this new campus that he thought was going to be great. I thought that was wonderful. I strongly supported his attachment to Merced. And he

supported my proposal to bring Merced to the status of having an approved division of the Senate.

But I had one issue that stood in the way of my supporting the establishment of a division. I knew the issues that had occurred at Santa Cruz and at some other campuses, with regard to staffing their Academic Senate and the inadequacy of staffing that resulted. I also knew that Merced, being small, could not afford a significant staff for the senate, but I felt that there at least had to be a senate director, and maybe additional staff, but at minimum, some kind of senate director and maybe some clerical help for that person.

So I went to speak with Carol Tomlinson-Keasey about this. She was enthusiastic about the notion of starting the division at Merced. She felt that that would be a meaningful way of showing that Merced was coming into its own, but she was adamantly opposed to the idea of having a staff member be staff to the senate.

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: Her feeling was that Merced was so small that they had a tradition of sharing staff. They hired staff who served multiple masters. And she said if there's a certain amount of work that needs to be done, that they had a staff process at Merced that could ensure that that work was done, and it didn't need a dedicated staff to the senate in order for that to happen. I said I thought that that was not a workable solution, my feeling being that the senate staff needed to serve the senate and to serve shared governance, that we really do have different authorities and that we need to be clear about the differences between those different authorities. So to me it was a matter of principle.

She completely disagreed with me and we made no progress in our discussions. I had a couple of discussions with her. It was very frustrating, and finally she dismissed it and said, "Go talk to David Ashley," who was the EVC. So I had some conversations with

Ashley. He wasn't a whole lot more supportive, but he also was a pragmatist. He also wanted the division. I was very clear that I was strongly supportive of division status for Merced, but I was unwilling to move this forward within the council or the assembly until such time that I was assured there would be a permanent staff supporting the Academic Senate at Merced. I didn't expect that Merced would be able to successfully advocate for itself once the division was formed. The CAP for Merced, as it turned out, quite rightly continued for several years to include systemwide members. They made it a Merced CAP, but they included systemwide members on the CAP.

After I stepped down as chair of the senate and came back to Santa Cruz, Merced asked me if I would be the co-chair of their Privilege and Tenure Committee, which I agreed to do, because they were writing their bylaws on Privilege and Tenure, and they wanted my expertise, and that seemed to me eminently reasonable. My condition was that since they were all fighting with each other by that time, I didn't want to get involved in those fights. I just said, "I'll do the bylaws, but I won't referee the fights."

Anyway, Ashley agreed to do it. So I started preparing the council for a discussion of making Merced an official division of the Academic Senate. Well, at that point, Cliff changed his mind and argued that Merced wasn't yet ready. I can only believe that Cliff changed his mind because I was supporting it. By that time, our relationship was really pretty bad. His argument was they don't have enough faculty to do the work of the senate. They're still too new and they need another couple of years in order to make that happen. He may have also been thinking that he wanted this to happen during his term as chair. I don't know. But he wasn't even supportive of my agreement with Ashly to get the staff for the senate. So it was all very nebulous. We weren't really talking to each other very much. I mean, we talked, but it wasn't like we were working together for a common good.

Reti: Awful.

Blumenthal: It was bad. When I brought the matter to council, at the end of the day Cliff argued strongly against divisional status for Merced and I, strongly for it. So we had gone a long way from Larry Pitts' model of the chair and vice chair staying out of discussions. I was the initiator of this and Cliff was the primary opponent. It was maybe a failure of my leadership that got us to that point. But anyway, we did get to that point. And Academic Council found our dispute on this issue very upsetting.

Academic Council overwhelmingly endorsed moving it forward to the assembly. So we brought it to the assembly. I carefully arranged for Joe Kiskis, who was a council member from Davis, to introduce the motion, which was listed in the agenda when the assembly met. He made the motion, it was seconded. Then Cliff jumped in and offered what he called a friendly amendment to basically emasculate the motion and prevent divisional status for Merced.

I was stunned. I was shocked by that attempted parliamentary maneuver. First of all, just to be really clear, in Robert's rules of orders, or Sturgis rules of order, it doesn't matter, there actually is no such thing as a friendly amendment. Once a motion has been made and seconded, it belongs to the floor. It doesn't belong to the maker or seconder of the motion. I know that's not what people usually do. But you can't just change a motion.

I had to do some quick thinking. Do I want to rely on that? How should I operate? And poor Joe Kiskis, who I just sort of tapped at the last minute to introduce this, he had no idea what was going on. He was thunderstruck by the difference between the motion that I'd asked him to introduce and the amendment that Cliff was offering as a friendly amendment. I think Cliff was trying to pull the wool over people's eyes.

Anyway, Joe was clearly confused. So he looked over at me, and I very clearly gave him a shake of the head. I said, "What do you think, Joe, as the mover of this motion?"

He said, "I'm against it."

Then we offered Cliff the opportunity to offer his amendment as an unfriendly amendment. I actually don't remember what he did. He may have gone through with it and it was voted down, or he may have withdrawn it. I simply don't remember now. I'm sure the minutes will reflect it. But at the end of the day, we approved moving Merced forward as a new division. It was an accomplishment I was very proud of. I was particularly proud of it because I did this in a way that ensured that they had a permanent director of the senate, which they might never have gotten otherwise. And I did it in a way that got a strong consensus within the senate for it to move forward. So I regarded it as a good thing. It would have happened eventually, anyway. But I thought they were ready. I'm proud to have been the chair that made that happen and shocked that this great supporter of Merced ended up being the main opponent of it happening.

It was really a strange situation, but Cliff is a very strange man and highly problematic.

UC Code of Ethics

So around this time, the regents decided, in their infinite wisdom, that they would institute a code of ethics for the university. This largely came from Judy Hopkinson, who was the leader of this effort. I think by this time she was the chair of the Audit Committee of the regents. So she wanted this code of ethics for the university to be passed by the regents. Ultimately the regents required all university employees to do a training covering the code of ethics on a regular basis. But there wasn't yet a statement from the regents on a code of ethics. So they drafted up one and sent it over to the senate for senate review.

Well, it was fine as a code of ethics. I'm giving you my opinion now. I'm not an expert on codes of ethics. But I had two law professors in my Academic Council, one of whom was John Oakley,¹⁷⁵ who we've already met in this story, and who we will meet again later. John is one of these people who will argue over a comma. Often, he has good points. He's a very smart guy. But he's also very didactic. Very. When you get into a discussion with John on an issue, you feel like you're talking to the Prophet at the Mount. (Reti laughs) A very typical law professor type of person in that regard. But very smart. John is very smart and his heart is very much in the right place. There's no question about that.

So even though most everybody on the senate side, including the campuses, seemed okay with the draft code of ethics, John as the chair of the Committee on Faculty Welfare, took great umbrage at the code, and in typical John fashion said it looked like it was written by an amateur. He just had lots of issues with it. So that put him at loggerheads with Judy. Two strong personalities.

The people who were trying to deal with it at the Office of General Counsel were at a loss for how to handle this. So we had some informal conversation about how to move forward and it was finally decided that we would have a phone conference call of Judy and John and me. But the folks from the OGC and from the regents' office wanted to be in my office when this happened, on the condition that they would never be called upon to say a word. They were not going to say anything. I didn't want to pretend that they weren't there. That doesn't strike me as ethical. But they just absolutely were insistent that the only three people talking in this conversation were Judy, John, and me. My view of the various issues on the table here was that if Judy and John could agree, I would certainly be supportive of anything they came up with. (laughs) I was fine with what Judy had done, and I would have been fine with what John came up with. We were arguing like this was the most important issue since the beginning of mankind.

So we had this conversation. And it was hilarious because it soon became clear that Judy and John were made for each other. They were the identical same person. (laughter) And ironically, we also discovered in the conversation that they were in the same graduating class at Berkeley.

Reti: But they didn't know each other?

Blumenthal: They didn't know each other. But wouldn't it have been ironic if they'd met, dated, and gotten married? (laughter) But they were at each other's throats in that conversation. Judy can ride a high horse. She was really upset with how John lectured at her because she felt that he was not giving her the respect that she deserved as a member of the regents. John, of course, thought he was right about everything. It was an amazing conversation.

I tried hard to be the mediator, to stop any and all efforts toward arguments about personality and make it about the issues, and to keep it on track. At a couple of points of impasse, I tried to propose compromise solutions. We're talking about stuff that is wording of phraseology here.

Reti: So it was really a language issue, primarily?

Blumenthal: Yeah. It wasn't fundamentally conceptual. John would argue it is conceptual, and maybe even Judy would argue that. It was an extremely interesting experience and it was one of my many interactions with Judy, who later became a friend. I still regard Judy as a friend. And when she comes through Santa Cruz—she's very close to Ceil Cirillo in town—and when she comes to Santa Cruz, Ceil and I have lunch with her.¹⁷⁶ Anyway, we finally got it resolved. I think Judy finally just refused to take some of the things from John, although I think she did make some modifications. But Judy could be really, really opinionated.

And since I'm on the subject of Judy, I remember one day, during that year when I was chair, the alumni regent was Gary Novack, who is a Santa Cruz alum. Gary was appointed to be chair of the Regents Audit Committee that year. Gary, I think, may have been the first alumni regent ever to chair a committee.

Reti: That's kind of a big deal.

Blumenthal: It's a big deal. But I remember one day I was sitting in my office, minding my own business, and all of a sudden I get a call from Judy out of the blue. And she starts yelling at me. She's really yelling at me because she's really objecting to the agenda of the audit committee of the regents. The chair and vice chair share which committees we sit on. So we each sit on half the committee. I didn't sit on Audit. So she goes on for about five minutes without pausing to take a breath, yelling at me about the agenda and how it was set for the Audit Committee.

Finally, I interrupted her and I said, "Judy, I don't understand. Why are you yelling at me about this? Shouldn't you be talking to Gary?"

She said, "Oh. George? I'm sorry. I meant to call Gary."

Reti: Oh, God. (laughter)

Blumenthal: (laughs) Okay. Well should we maybe call it a day?

Reti: Yeah, sure.

Government Relations

Reti: All right. So today is Friday, January 4, 2019. This is Irene Reti. I'm here for my seventeenth session of the oral history with Chancellor George Blumenthal. George, we're going to start today by talking about government relations.

Blumenthal: So while I was at the Office of the President as vice chair and then chair—and I think Larry Pitts really started this—we were frustrated in that we felt that government relations was important, and that the senate should be involved in some ways, particularly since there were academic issues that came up. But we were very much excluded from the government relations discussions. We couldn't get ourselves invited or any representatives. We wanted one of our staff members to attend the meetings of the government relations folks at UCOP, but they wouldn't invite us. They wouldn't even share with us their analysis of legislation. So we were very frustrated.

Good old Larry decided, okay, fine. We'll do it ourselves. So he assigned a staff member and I continued that assignment after he left. We assigned a staff member to every few weeks to go and identify legislation pending before the legislature that would be of interest to the senate, and to follow that legislation, which you can do on the web, and see what changes were being made. So every few weeks, we would get a list from this person of what we might be concerned about, and occasionally we wanted to intervene or to do something about it. But that way we had information and it was reasonably up to date, although we didn't have the benefit of the government relations analysis and they were much more used to dealing with the legislature.

Reti: I know you can't really know their reasons, but what was your general sense of why it was they didn't want the Academic Senate involved?

Blumenthal: I think they didn't want to establish a precedent of working with the senate on this. Even if they thought Larry was reasonable, or I was reasonable, they didn't know what might come at another time.

Reti: I see.

Blumenthal: And once the camel's nose is under the tent, it stays under the tent. (Reti laughs) So I think that was part of it. Part of it was just turf preservation. And then there was another part of it which kind of amazed me. Because after Larry left, I continued his process of having a staff member follow legislation. I shared that information with the Academic Council. But as my term got closer to the end, maybe two-thirds of the way through my term, they relented and said that they would share with us their analyses and we could send a representative to all of the government relations meetings. I think M.R.C. may have had a role in that, because government relations lived under M.R.C. in those days, I believe, or at least a piece of it did.

M.R.C. was by then the provost at UCOP. And I did appeal to her. I don't remember whether they reported to her, but a good chunk of it reported to her. I think it was her intervention that made the difference. So, we got invited. I started getting the updated reports on legislation, which in fairness included much more legislation than I was interested in. I was interested in stuff that affected the academic enterprise, or the financial enterprise to the extent that that affected the academic enterprise. I started getting those reports. The thing that most struck me was that the analysis of the bills that we were interested in was so much better from our little analyst who had no training and no experience in government relations, but who had just gone on the web and followed it. Her summaries were far better than what we were getting, and more up to date than we were getting from government relations. It was quite a shock to me to see that. And so actually our inclusion probably upgraded their effectiveness as an organization. (laughter)

But another thing that happened (and I think it's not on my list of topics), was at one point—and I'm not even sure I remember why this happened—but I was asked by someone in the Office of the President to go to Sacramento and testify before one of the

legislative committees. There were a couple of issues I was interested in that the university was supposed to testify about that dealt with academic issues. And there were a couple of issues that I was less interested in that they wanted me to cover as well. They sent Julie Zelmonovitch with me. Julie was a mathematics professor from Santa Barbara, who had left Santa Barbara to take on a position to deal with undergraduate and graduate affairs at UCOP in the provost's office. He was a faculty-member-type person, and he was very experienced and very good.

So he and I drove to Sacramento for me to do this presentation and this testimony before the committee. I was really puzzled, because I really didn't understand why they were asking me to do this rather than Julie. It was an interesting and sobering experience because it was nice in the sense that one of the committee members then was Senator Jack Scott, who I knew fairly well.¹⁷⁷ Can I do an aside?

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: So put a pin where we are.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: Some years earlier, when we were in Israel for sabbatical, we had taken a number of vacations while we were in Israel, particularly during Jewish holidays. (laughs) And one of those vacations was to Greece, where we spent a week on a bus tour of Greece. It was just a standard bus tour. Our kids were with us, but they were like the only kids. But there was this couple there, Jack Scott and his wife, on this bus tour. I talked to him and found out he was at the time a state assemblyman from Pasadena, which made me assume, naturally, that he was a Republican. (Reti laughs) Well, in those days I would have assumed that someone from Pasadena was Republican. But in the course of the week, because we spent a lot of time together, he seemed so reasonable. I finally had the

courage to ask him what party he was from and he said he was a Democrat. That impressed me. Well it turned out he had been the president of Pasadena City College, so he was well known in the area. So he was easily elected, and then was easily elected senator, and reelected senator.

But we had developed a relationship and had some good conversations during that time. So I knew him fairly well. We always made a point of saying hello to each other whenever we crossed paths during many years thereafter.

Anyway, Jack was on the committee, and that was kind of nice to see him again in that role. The chairwoman of that committee was from Berkeley, and she was very hostile, particularly on some issue that touched on labor relations. I was only supposed to mention it in some context about some legislation. It wasn't something I particularly cared about, but boy, did she give it to me for that. I wondered afterwards whether I was being thrown to the wolves.

Reti: (laughs) Right, and that's why they wanted you.

Blumenthal: I had no idea of the political consequences because again, it wasn't an issue I was particularly interested in. I mentioned it because they'd told me that this was something that I had to address.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: So it was an interesting and educational experience, and I'm glad I did it. It's always helpful to be in such situations. And that stood me in good stead for later.

But anyway, I think we had a positive effect on government relations and it had the added benefit of making the Academic Council and the Academic Senate more aware of legislative stuff. Because unlike the CSU system or the community college system, where

virtually anything they do has to be approved by the legislature, UC is autonomous. The regents have constitutional autonomy. And therefore, the legislature cannot pass bills having to do with the academic structure of the university. We don't have that authority. And as a result, we in the Academic Senate tended to ignore a lot of what was going on in Sacramento in terms of detailed bills because we didn't live or die by what they did. But I notice that the CSU leadership, the faculty leadership and the community college faculty follow those bills in Sacramento assiduously because of course, they live or die based upon what that legislation says. And I felt that that was appropriate for them to do it, and I didn't think we needed to be at that level of scrutiny. But I felt that zero scrutiny was too little, and that we needed to be at least a little bit better informed.

Reti: Is there any other state university in the United States that has constitutional autonomy the way UC does?

Blumenthal: I don't know the answer to your question. If there are, there are not many. It's quite rare. We may be alone.

I think our constitutional autonomy came there from virtually the start of the university. It may have been because they were concerned about political stuff with the university. I would remind you that for many years constitutional amendments have been put forward in the legislature to remove that constitutional autonomy. They've never gotten very far, but that threat is always there. And one of the consequences is that the regents rarely invoke constitutional autonomy.

University Police and Surveillance

One of the things about being chair of the senate was that I felt very, very strongly that I was not there to represent George Blumenthal and my set of opinions, which I did have, but that my role was to represent the Academic Senate. I felt that very strongly as a matter

of principle. That was not hard, because generally speaking, I was pretty middle of the road with regard to the senate. It was almost never the case that anything came up that I found unpalatable, or that I didn't agree with.

But there was one issue that gave me a lot of heartburn. That issue had to do with university police. So, at least at that time, the university police were basically constituted through state law. There's a state law that constitutes university police and gives them police power, just as there is a state law that talks about the police powers of local police. And the two sections are almost completely identical. There are very few differences between, (at least, I'm talking about the time of 2005), between university police and local municipal police or sheriffs. But one difference that existed, and it may have been the only difference, had to do with the authority of the police to do certain kind of questioning, or to listen in on certain kinds of phone calls as part of an investigation. Let me give an example. So for example, under state law, if a woman experiences date rape, for example, one well known investigative method would be for the police to encourage the survivor to call the perpetrator and talk about it on the phone while the police are listening to and recording the phone call. That is legal. It's perfectly legal for them to do it, as long as they have the permission of the victim. That's a police power that all municipal police and district attorneys do have. However, the university police did not have that authority. And so, the university police brought forward, and then the university, brought forward a proposal to change state law to give this additional power to the university police on the grounds that some crimes—and date rape is a prime example—could be much more effectively investigated under those circumstances.

That issue came before the Academic Council when Larry was chair and basically the council said at the time, "We're not interested. This is an administrative issue. It isn't one

that concerns the Academic Senate, and so we will back off from even opining on the subject.”

However, the matter didn't get resolved. And lo and behold, during my time as chair, the issue arose from a member of the Academic Council who followed more closely what was going on in Sacramento. I think it was a Davis member, actually, who was adamantly opposed to this increase in police power.¹⁷⁸ That person, Joe Kiskis, quite legitimately, brought his concerns to the council and it was perfectly legitimate for him to do that. I, of course, took the position that this matter was settled, that the council had had an opportunity to opine and had explicitly declined to do so. But he felt that the council could take up whatever it wanted. My concern was not so much with the position but with the appearance of fickleness on the part of the senate. I really wanted there not to be this image that the senate changes its mind every year. To me, that was much more important than the substance of the issue. On the other hand, there were those on council who came to believe that because the university is such a special place, infringements on the rights to privacy within a university context are a threat to academic freedom and free discourse.

Reti: So for example, could that involve surveillance of a faculty member whose research might be considered too radical to the point of perhaps encouraging terrorism or something? Maybe that's too extreme an example. But is that what they were going for?

Blumenthal: This was about telephone calls, so it's not a search. It's really about privacy of conversations. And the only reason that the police can do this in municipalities is because they have the victim's permission to do this. So normally you can't record a conversation unless both parties agree. This was an exception to that rule. But the university police didn't have it. In fact, when the issue came up on campuses, what typically occurred was that if the university police wanted to do this, they would go to the

local municipal police, if the campus was within a municipality. Or they would go to the district attorney, both of whom had the authority to do it, and ask them to sign off on it. So in practice, there was an alternative way for the university police to accomplish the same goal. But they didn't have the authority in and of themselves to do it. So I don't think this was about radical professors or anything like that. This was about particularly crimes against people, and an investigative tool for that.

Reti: Okay. So I think what I'm not understanding here is the link with academic freedom.

Blumenthal: No, it's a fair question. I'm not sure I can give you a good answer because I didn't really buy it myself. But I think people made the argument that the university is a special place where there has to be freedom to say everything you want. And if you know that the university police under certain circumstances have the right to, unknown to you, record your conversations, then that could serve as an inhibition of your ability in general to have free conversations within the university.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: I mean, you can make the argument. But in any event, I thought that there was an argument there. But to me, the issue of fickleness of the senate outweighed the issue of the substance of the argument. I couldn't even get to the substance of it personally, because I was so concerned about the reputation of the senate as a whole. So we had a very robust debate about the issue within council and ultimately, I lost on that. The council voted to explicitly retract its earlier position and actively oppose this legislation and even wanted a representative or someone to go and argue for the senate position. I successfully made the case that it would not be appropriate for me to go and make that case and instead encouraged the Davis faculty member to go and do that on

behalf of council. He agreed to do it and did so and I think that was perfectly fine. I mean, in the real world, I probably could have, and maybe even should have, in the absence of any alternative, done that myself, even if I disagreed with the position I was advocating. But that's uncomfortable, to argue a case that you completely disagree with. I didn't completely disagree with it, but my heart was not in it. And so, one of the consequences of that was that I felt compelled to go to the appropriate vice president of the university, who was Joe Mullinix, and basically apologize to him and be upfront about the fact that we were changing our mind. I thought that all I could do was be honest. So I did. And I think they were not happy. The police departments were not happy. Ultimately that year the legislation, which had been on a track to pass, didn't pass and maybe this played some role in that decision not to pass it. Again, I don't really know where it stands today. There's been a lot of years since then. I even would today say that there is some advantage to being able to do it. But it is, as I say, doable through either local municipal police or through the DA.

But in any event, to me, the big issue there was the consistency of the senate position, which I wanted to maintain. Who was it that said consistency is a hobgoblin of a small mind? I believe it was Emerson.¹⁷⁹ Consistency isn't everything. But the lack of consistency can be a danger and can lessen credibility of an institution. So, that's why I was concerned.

WASC and UC Accreditation

I did talk about WASC a little. WASC, you know, is the group that accredits universities. I had never been a real fan of going through accreditation. I think I've told the stories of doing it as chair of the senate here, and avoiding it every earlier time. So it was something that was on my mind. Then I started hearing complaints from the community colleges

and from the CSU people about how horrible WASC reviews were. So one night I just came up with this idea: why not try to change the system so that WASC actually accredits the entire University of California system in one fell swoop, and the entire CSU system in one fell swoop, and the entire community college system in one fell swoop. I raised that issue with council and they loved it. Then I brought it to ICAS, the Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates and they absolutely loved it. So we decided to pursue the idea.

I put together a little group and we put together an outline of a proposal. I even discussed it with people at UCOP. I didn't get a lot of negative reaction, but didn't get a lot of positive feedback, either. But I figured, what the hell.

So I decided to go to WASC itself. I went and I had a conversation with Ralph Wolff.¹⁸⁰ It was very sobering. Ralph was, at the time, the president of WASC and he was for some considerable time the leader of WASC. Basically, he said no, which didn't surprise me. (laughs) WASC is supposed to be a college and university-led organization, so I felt that we had some potential there. I also felt we had some potential because WASC, at the time, had a WASC governing council consisting solely of senior administrators at universities; they did not have a single faculty member on it. I really held his feet to the fire on that, which, in fairness to him and to WASC, at the time, I think that they had had a faculty member, but that faculty member was appointed a dean while he was on the WASC council. I just pointed out that rank and file faculty should have a role to play in accreditation and accreditation oversight. I think that they did try to do that subsequently and I give them credit for that. But in any event, he educated me to the realities of accreditation, which really are that the accreditor, in this case, WASC, really stands between the Department of Education and the universities. It's our fancy way of avoiding more direct oversight and accreditation by the federal government, and because the federal government recognizes accreditation by these local agencies, we avoid a lot of

other issues down the line. If we tried to do this for the entire system; that would not be acceptable to WASC and therefore would open up dangers for the university as well.

Reti: Why wouldn't it be acceptable to WASC?

Blumenthal: Because they felt that the campuses were different entities; no other system was accredited as a system, etcetera; and the issues that come up are really campus-based issues. So basically, that effort died and didn't go anywhere. It did get me to know Ralph, which was interesting. I did interact with him after I became chancellor. He tried very hard to twist my arm. Well, maybe I can say this now. After I was appointed chancellor, he called me up and asked me if I would be agreeable to be elected to the council, the oversight council of WASC. And I'd interacted more with Ralph. I'd gone to several WASC regional meetings. But I said to him, "Look, I'm so busy. I just started this job. And being on the WASC council is a huge undertaking, a lot of work." Larry Vanderhoef had done it for years at Davis and he was going to step out.¹⁸¹ He had recommended that I be approached. So I said, "I can't really even think about this for a year." So he agreed. So he went away for a while. Sure enough, a year later, he called me back. (Reti laughs) By then, I knew a little bit more. I'd found out how much work it is. It is a *lot* of work. And frankly, it didn't even interest me that much. So I said to him, "I have a guy here at Santa Cruz, Bill Ladusaw, who is my vice provost of undergraduate education, and who absolutely thinks a lot about WASC issues. He's very interested in WASC and he would be a great candidate for the council."

I might add, by the way, the council is elected by all of the presidents of all of the universities covered by WASC. But it's like a Soviet election. There's a panel that's prepared, and they always get elected. So I said, "Why not just put up Bill Ladusaw? He

would be great. He'd love to do it. And I talked to him about it and he's very interested in the subjects."

He didn't want to go there, so it was clear to me that Ralph wasn't looking at me for my brilliance of mind. He was looking at me because I held the title of chancellor, and they wanted a UC chancellor in that group. So it made me very glad that I'd said no. Then I think they turned to Tim White and got Tim to do it for a while. I'm not sure who's doing it now. It might be Kim Wilcox, but I'm not sure. But it's not me, and that was most important to me. Yeah, so anyway, that was the WASC story with ICAS. There is an interesting epilog to this story. Years later, after Ralph had left WASC, there was something of a revolt among universities accredited by WASC, led by the Stanford provost. One outcome was that a reform slate was elected to the Council, and among those elected was Bill Ladusaw, who was then dean of humanities. Bill indeed did a great job on that council and was elected chair of the council and oversaw reforms and the replacement of the WASC leadership.

The other issue on ICAS that I really pushed when I was on ICAS had to do with transfer. I've mentioned a couple of transfer initiatives already.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: But there was stuff going on that I found vaguely troubling. There was another group, I think it was called the ITC, but for the life of me, I couldn't tell you what those initials stood for. Intersegmental, obviously, was one of them. But it was basically an amalgam of the leaders of the ICAS from the three segments—so the three of us—plus a bunch of other people from the other segments holding all kinds of administrative positions at various different levels. It was a committee of about twenty people that met every few months in Sacramento. And these were the most worthless meetings I ever

attended in my life. It was all well-intentioned. They all wanted to do good things. They wanted to coordinate. I think they were actually a group that reported to the roundtable. So they had an official umbrella organization. But these meetings would take place; they were the kinds of meetings where three people get up and give presentations, and then you go home. It was just really boring. But one of the things they decided they were going to do was they decided they were going to do this major report on transfer among the segments. They talked about how they were putting it together. It was called the transfer report. They had set up some committees. I was even on one of the committees that was supposed to look at some aspect of the transfer report. I was struck by the fact that they were doing all this stuff on transfer without really serious input from the faculty of the three segments of public higher education.

So I went back to ICAS and I suggested that we should do our own transfer report. It should be a faculty-driven transfer report that talks about our perceptions as faculty, with the idea that if we could come to some mutual agreements about transfer from the faculty of the three systems, that that would be a major step forward. And so, in fact, we did put together a transfer report. I was hoping we would do it annually. My idea was to make this an annual report. I don't think it continued, but it may have. I think Michael Brown told me they tried to do it again when he was on ICAS. But in any event, we did it. It is out there. And I think it was important that there be a faculty voice in this discussion, a clearly-defined faculty voice, because one of the things that most struck me was the fact that the faculty among the three segments worked together better than I had ever imagined would be the case. When I first went to ICAS, my fear was I would have nothing in common with community college faculty, or with CSU faculty. We lived in such different universes that we would see things through very different colored glasses. But

that wasn't the case at all. There was just a lot of agreement about things and I felt like we needed to capitalize better on that agreement.

Reti: That's interesting.

Blumenthal: So, that was that topic.

We're getting toward the end of this period. There were a bunch of issues. Now you understand why I thought being chair of the senate was such an interesting year. We haven't even gotten to the faculty representative part yet.

Admissions Requirements and High School Science

This is an issue which persists today and I think it's an interesting issue. But it really rose up when I was chair of the senate. I found it somewhat awkward. The University of California requirements for high school students are to take three years of science. Those sciences could be biology, chemistry, or physics.

Reti: Not earth sciences.

Blumenthal: I'm sorry?

Reti: Not earth sciences.

Blumenthal: Not earth sciences. Not astronomy. There arose, at the time, a movement to encourage that earth sciences and/or astronomy be allowed to be taught in the high schools as satisfying the A through G requirement. The argument was made that those are sciences that interest people and have practical import that are much more closely related to people's lives, etcetera. The counter argument is that at that stage in a student's career, you're looking to build the building blocks of knowledge.

Reti: Yeah, I could see both sides of it for sure.

Blumenthal: Right. You could make the argument on either side. BOARS, which was the Board of Admissions and Regulations with Schools, which normally sets those requirements, came down pretty strongly on the traditional approach. But as chair of the senate I was heavily lobbied. Ralph Cicerone, who had been the chancellor at Irvine, but who by that time had moved and become the president of the National Academy of Sciences—he was a geologist—Ralph called me up one day and said, “You’ve got to make this change. You’ve got to make sure this happens.” I was trying to explain to Ralph there’s kind of a process involved, which he knew very well. But still, he was lobbying heavily on behalf of geology. I had friends in astronomy who also lobbied me.

Reti: Yeah, I was thinking, you’re in kind of an interesting position as a physicist by training, an astrophysicist in the astronomy department.

Blumenthal: I do believe in flexibility and I’m not completely sure that all high school students need to take these courses. On the other hand, I think if you’re going to go on to college, you really do need to be strong in the basics. So I’m generally supportive of the tougher position. Or to say it a different way, among my own students, I’ve always told them they needed to learn physics before they learned astronomy. If you learn physics first, it’s easy to learn the astronomy. If you learn astronomy first, and learn the physics when you need it, that’s always going to be much, much harder.

So again, all I wanted to do was acknowledge that that was a point of some controversy, not just at California, but nationally. It’s somewhat akin to the discussions that now take place about whether or not computer science should count as a math course for admissions.

Reti: And where did it end up?

Blumenthal: I don't think anything changed at the time, but by the time of this oral history, the requirements have now been changed to allow the third year of science to be earth or space sciences.

Working with M.R.C. Greenwood as Provost of the University of California

So a month after I arrived, Bob Dynes became president. Jud King then announced that he was stepping down as provost and a few months later, they hired M.R.C. Greenwood to be the provost, which I had mixed feelings about. I liked M.R.C. a lot, so I was really pleased she was coming up to UCOP and that I would work with her. On the other hand, I thought her loss to the campus would be significant. On the other hand, I also thought that she wasn't likely to stay much longer at Santa Cruz, in any event. I knew she had been pursued elsewhere. I think she and Dynes had been hired as chancellors at about the same time, so they had a good relationship, at least at that moment in time. It all looked good.

I also felt good about it because by that time I was already aware of some of the power struggles that were taking place at UCOP. So I was delighted M.R.C. was coming, and I delighted in saying to people that I thought she was going to be the chief among the vice presidents. There was no way she would take a second seat to anybody. I thought that this was going to be a culture change for the Office of the President.

A few months after M.R.C. Greenwood arrived [as Provost of the University of California] the university began talking about a new program that was established to train high school science teachers. Today we call it Cal Teach. The program still exists, and it's very active and successful. It had a different name in those days. I can't remember what it was called then. But this was going to be organized through the Office of the President. The idea was to take students who are majoring in the sciences and offer them an opportunity to supplement their education by taking some education courses, so that when they

graduate, they could very easily go on and become certified as a high school science teacher. The idea was that this would increase the number of high school teachers and could, for a relatively modest investment, could raise the level of teaching of sciences in the high schools by a lot. So it was an intrinsically good idea.

It soon became clear that this program would be housed in Academic Affairs, as it should be. M.R.C. informed Larry and me that she planned to just bring in Lynda Goff from UCSC to run the program at UCOP. I felt (and expressed myself strongly) that for the leader of an initiative of this importance, there should be either a full search or at least a UC-wide search. M.R.C. strongly disagreed with me. I also felt there needed to be meaningful senate input on this search. It was, to be blunt, a rather difficult discussion in her office. An hour or so later, M.R.C. stopped by my office, and we managed to find a number of common points of agreement. In the end, M.R.C. did appoint Lynda, who did bring a vision and spirit of innovation to the program.

Bruce Darling

So next, I was just going to muse about a few of the people up there if that's worth doing. I talked about some of them already. I don't know if this is useful, but I just made a list of some of the key people up there at the time. And some of this I've mentioned already, so it isn't like this is brand-new.

So, Bruce Darling was the vice president of external affairs. Interesting man. He had been the vice chancellor of external affairs at San Diego when Atkinson was chancellor there, and then moved with him up to UCOP. Bruce was the interface with the regents. Bruce spent much of his life working with regents. He took a lot of calls with regents; he did polls of regents before regents meetings to see what the vote would be. I remember one meeting, in particular, there was a controversial issue. I don't even remember what it was.

But Bruce shared with me what the vote was going to be. I remember at the regents meeting I was sitting next to Sherry Lansing and when the issue came up, three of the opponents of the issue spoke first, and spoke very strongly against this proposal, whatever it was. Sherry leaned over to me and whispered to me and said, "I was going to speak in favor of this, but it's clear it isn't going to pass, so I won't waste my time."

I leaned over to her and I said, "Sherry, it's going to pass. It's got the votes."

She said, "How could that possibly be? Everybody's speaking against it."

I said, "Yeah, but if you count the whole votes, it's going to pass." I said, "Go ahead and say your thing." So she did. And sure enough, it passed. (Reti laughs)

So, Bruce was an excellent vote counter. Bruce was also extremely smart, a very smart man. I think he only has a bachelor's degree, but very smart on a wide range of issues. He was one of those people that could convince me to change my mind based just upon logical argument. So a lot of respect for his intelligence.

But Bruce was power hungry and he did have huge fights with M.R.C. while they were there. M.R.C. despised him. It was clear that he was very, very, very ambitious. I think he would have wanted to be president. I think there were regents who would have been fine with that. Bruce is a nice guy. I know Larry used to go bicycling with him on weekends. But very power hungry, and not somebody who I would ever have completely trusted.

Of course M.R.C. was the vice president of academic affairs and provost. It was interesting to see M.R.C. at UCOP as opposed to on campus at UCSC. I think I've already said to you that I think M.R.C. was a remarkably successful chancellor.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: I have huge admiration of the work she did at Santa Cruz. She made us believers. She raised the excellence of the campus. She raised the quality of the work that's done on campus during her time and she did it through will and leadership. I give her tremendous credit for that. But at UCOP, she was the provost, not the president. Her job was to lead Academic Affairs, and in a sense be a cog in the machine of the Office of the President, as led by the president. I think she was influential. She met frequently with Bob. I think she tried very hard to run Academic Affairs much like she ran her cabinet here at Santa Cruz. But in truth, I don't think she was as effective a provost as she was chancellor. If I would have given her a grade of A or A plus as chancellor, I would have given her a grade of maybe a B as provost.

M.R.C. and I were not close buddies, but I knew her pretty well, and we were friendly. I thought she really enjoyed being chancellor. She seemed to have a lot of fun being chancellor. I never saw that in her as provost. I just didn't see the little girl in her having fun. I don't mean that in at all a derogatory way. I mean that, I just didn't see the joy that I saw with her as chancellor.

Reti: She really did love this place. It was very clear when I interviewed her for her oral history.

Blumenthal: Her personal sense of satisfaction, I didn't think was anywhere near where it was when she was chancellor. And I think, even before things went sour between her and Dynes, she was not entirely satisfied with her role. I think it was different than what she had hoped for, and I think she felt some level of frustration. Part of it was that Dynes himself was starting to lose power because of the compensation stuff.

Reti: Yes. That was all going on during that period, right.

Blumenthal: I'll come back to that again later. But I don't think she was as happy. So that really was unfortunate. But I worked well with her overall. Despite that one incident, there were many instances where M.R.C. and I worked together very, very well. I relied on her to bring home things. We passed something that was surprisingly radical. We wanted the calendars of the campuses to have some similarity to one another, so the council passed a resolution asking that, for all of the semester campuses to start on the same day each semester, and all of the quarter campuses to start on the same day each quarter. We didn't feel like we could tell the campuses to keep the rest of the schedule throughout the quarter or the semester the same. They could schedule final exams differently, etcetera. We just wanted everybody to start at the same time. It didn't seem to me like a particularly controversial suggestion. It was very, very difficult. The registrars throughout the system were adamantly opposed to this. We just couldn't get any cooperation. So I finally, ultimately had to go to M.R.C. and say, "Can you force the registrars to do this?" And she ultimately did.

Reti: And they were opposed because of the autonomy?

Blumenthal: Autonomy issues, yeah. And she ultimately did. So from my perspective, she was really great. From her perspective, I was also of benefit to her in a number of regards. I can think of several examples. For example, when she decided to hire somebody to do the data analysis for the Office of Academic Affairs on admissions issues, like on diversity and stuff like that, all of the data analysis, that was, at the time, a big deal. After the search had been done and they had done all the interviews, she asked me to go in and personally interview a couple of the candidates and give her my personal feedback before she made a final decision. I appreciated that she would ask me to do that. So I think we were mutually helpful.

I often wondered how she would get along with my successor. But that's another story for another day.

Other Key Figures at the University of California, Office of the President

Another person who was up there who got very little credit for how good he was Joe Mullinix. Joe Mullinix was the vice president for business affairs. He was a very quiet guy. He was not one of these people who was really assertive, in your face, like everybody else up there. But he was very competent. He knew a lot. And very reasonable. And Larry, to his credit, decided to have monthly meetings with Mullinix, which I came to. I continued those when I was chair. I found I learned a lot from Mullinix and somewhat to Mullinix's surprise, he learned a lot from me as well. And it actually got to the point where I sometimes served as the communications channel between vice presidents, which was kind of a strange thing for the senate chair to be, but I was talking to everybody, which was kind of my style. So that was helpful.

Another person I interacted with a lot—I think I've mentioned her before—is Ellen Switkes,¹⁸² who was very helpful in her role in Academic Affairs. It was kind of a pleasure to see a Santa Cruz person there. Another person who was very important, and who will play a role later was Linda Williams. She had been in San Diego with Bob Dynes and moved with him to the Office of the President. She was very good and again, very accessible. She'll play a part in the story, maybe later today, as we get to the faculty representative piece of it. But I wanted to acknowledge her because she was so open.

Bob Dynes himself I've already discussed a little bit. I had a lot of admiration for Dynes. Dynes had cabinet meetings weekly; in fact, I was a member of his cabinet, just as Larry had been a member of his cabinet before, so it was only the senate chair who attended. This is a curious little footnote of history—when I became a member of the president's

cabinet, I always sat in the same seat. The president sat at the head of the table and at his right was the provost, M.R.C. I always sat next to M.R.C. It's curious that through much of my time at the Council of Chancellors, in fact, most of my time, I sit in the same seat. (laughter)

Cabinet was very interesting. I modeled my cabinet here after Dynes's cabinet, much more so than after M.R.C.'s. M.R.C.'s cabinet meetings, to the extent that I attended them, were very M.R.C.-centric, always. She drove the entire conversation. Dynes' approach was to lead the conversation on issues of interest to him for fifteen minutes, twenty minutes, maybe a half hour, and then go around the table and ask everybody for an update on their area. So that's how I did it, when I came in as chancellor. Denice Denton had eliminated the chancellor's cabinet, so I reestablished it and adopted that approach to meetings throughout my time as chancellor

I was also very grateful to Dynes and to M.R.C. because when my term was up, the two of them took me out to dinner sort of as a going away gesture. I was moved and just very, very grateful to them for that. It was a very nice touch.

I mentioned before Maria Bertero-Barceló. Maria was fantastic. She knew and understood every issue before the senate. She was current with it. If you look on the web at the Council agendas from that period, you would understand how organized and detailed they are. Those were impressive documents. They were one to two hundred pages long and they had full agendas with everything clearly labeled: whether this was the first time it was before the council; what action might have been taken previously; whether this time was a discussion item or action item; where the background material in the packet was. Just a great agenda. I thought it was really good. I only added one feature to them when I was chair. Our council meetings were always so overloaded and so full that we could never get

through agendas. So when I became chair of the council, I decided to put times on all of the items. I think we still didn't get through every agenda, but we got through more of them.

But Maria was fantastic, one of the hardest working people I ever saw. I used to joke with her that she spent the night there because she was always there when I got there in the morning—which wasn't that hard—but she was also often there when I left at night. I would leave at seven, 7:30 sometimes. So she just was a tremendous person. And very approachable. I worked so well with her, and we really enjoyed talking about issues together. I just really can't say enough good about her.

Maria had to work with all these faculty from all the campuses who served on senate committees and task forces, and they were turning over every year. She had a very standard *modus operandus*. She called everybody Professor So and So. Consequently, she always called me Professor Blumenthal. But you know how informal I am. So when I got up there as vice chair, the first day I was talking with her and she called me Professor Blumenthal. I said, "Oh, Maria, if I'm calling you Maria, why don't you just call me George? This is no big deal." She didn't say anything. And from then on, she continued to call me Professor Blumenthal. And if you think about it, it's very logical because if she were to differentiate, it could be deemed as favoritism for a staff member to do that, and it could lead to some very awkward situations.

So I totally understand that. But what was funny about it was that a few years later, I invited Maria to come to Santa Cruz for my inauguration as chancellor. I'm delighted she came. We even had her over to the house. But she continued to call me Professor Blumenthal.

Reti: Oh, dear. (laughter)

Blumenthal: I did not have the heart to point out to her that I was now Chancellor Blumenthal.

Faculty Representative to the UC Regents

I wanted to talk now about being a faculty representative to the regents. I'm going to include in here my role on the chancellor searches as well.

So I had been to a few regents meetings before I started at my first regents meeting. The first regents meeting was kind of interesting in several regards. First of all, when the meeting started, I was introduced to the regents. And followed immediately by the introduction of the then-new appointed regent, Dolores Huerta.¹⁸³ Dolores had been appointed by the governor, who was then still Gray Davis, to an uncompleted term of another regent. So her appointment was only for a year or two. It was unfortunate, because I think she wanted to be reappointed later, but by then it was Schwarzenegger. And he wasn't going to do it. In fact, what I heard was that Norm Pattiz had been appointed as a regent for a short term and then Davis had reappointed him, but he was having trouble with confirmation with some of the Democrats. So part of the deal was that he appointed Dolores in order to make it a package deal that everyone could get behind. I liked Dolores. I enjoyed talking with her. It was a little intimidating because you know, they announced, "George Blumenthal's joining the regents." Everyone kind of murmured. Then they announced (Reti laughs) that Dolores Huerta was joining the regents—

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: —and there were these cheers! (laughter)

Reti: You can't compete with that.

Blumenthal: Of course, I understood the reason. Dolores and I sat next to each other a lot in those early regents meetings, which, by the way, took place in Laurel Heights in those days. I'm not sure why she was seated so near me a lot of the time, but it was a reality, and as I said, I enjoyed talking with her.

The seating was also interesting. Unlike current regents meetings, where the regents sit around kind of a circular or closed curve where part of the curve is not closed—it's just the speakers or whoever comes up to give a presentation—at Laurel Heights it was a closed oblong table. The president sat at the front of the room with the chair of the regents and they always put the faculty representatives and some of the newest regents opposite the president. I always was placed right opposite the president. So I used to joke that we were there because he wanted to keep an eye on us. (Reti laughs)

And in fact, one day I came in early, and just for the heck of it, I moved our name plates around. I went out and I got a bagel. And by the time I came back, someone had moved it back. (laughs)

Reti: Wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: One thing that I remember from that first meeting was that there was a demonstration against Ward Connerly by BAMN, By Any Means Necessary. It got raucous enough that they closed down the regents meeting so all the regents got up from the table to walk out, and this line of police came into the room, with batons. Just a real line of police. The police came in right behind where I was sitting. I stayed there because I've been at many demonstrations and I kind of wanted to see what was going to happen. And I prefer to be on that side of the police line than the other side of the police line. So I was going to stay there to watch what happened. But they wouldn't let me. Somebody told me I had to leave. So I left. So those are my memories of my first regents meeting.

I really didn't get to know the regents for a while. And soon after I started as vice chair and as faculty representative—

Reti: Wait, so can I stop you for one second.

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: So I'm not fully understanding—like what is a faculty representative position?

Blumenthal: So the board of regents has eighteen appointed voting regents, plus a number of ex officio voting regents, including one student regent. But it also has two faculty representatives who sit at the table with the regents, who participate fully in any discussions with the regents, who sit in on all closed sessions, and all regents-only sessions, but who do not vote. Much of this comes ultimately from the constitution. Article 9, Section 9 says that the regents may include a voting student regent and a voting faculty regent. The student regent tradition began many, many years earlier, when Article 9, Section 9 was implemented. The faculty, however, adopted the tradition of having the chair and vice chair of the systemwide senate serve as simultaneously the faculty representatives to the regents.

Reti: Thank you. That's what I wasn't understanding. This was part of your duties as chair and vice chair of the systemwide senate.

Blumenthal: So it's a non-voting position. And then the issue came up—it certainly came up during Larry's time, and I re-raised it a little bit when I was chair—but it was most extensively discussed for several years at the Academic Council, whether or not the faculty should opt to request voting status for our faculty representative, or at least one of the faculty representatives. It's an interesting question because when I first came on the Academic Council as the division chair at Santa Cruz, my reaction was: why the hell not?

Why would you ever give up your voting rights? Of course you ask for voting rights. Who would be stupid enough not to do that? But, by the time I became vice chair of the senate, I'd evolved to become very much opposed to the idea of requesting voting rights because I felt that, and I still feel today, that in a role as an advisor, or a representative, a representative from the senate, as a representative you have, in a sense you're above the political fray. You're not a part of vote counts. Nobody can lobby you. And even more importantly, I felt obliged—I know Larry felt the same way, and I know Michael Brown felt the same way—that as the faculty representative to the regents, I was obliged to represent the views of the Academic Senate.

Reti: Right. Not George Blumenthal.

Blumenthal: Rather than George Blumenthal's views. And that's not consistent, necessarily, with voting because votes are often things that have to be decided on the spur of the moment. How do you vote on an amendment? Etcetera. I also felt that even if there was a clear senate position, there would be minority positions. Whereas as a faculty representative, I could represent both the majority and minority opinions of the senate. And so for all of those reasons, I felt that we were at a higher moral ground by not having a vote than by having a vote. I think that if I had had a vote, I would have felt obliged to vote my conscience because of the fiduciary responsibility of being a regent. Not that my personal opinions really differed much from the senate, so de facto, it wouldn't have really been a problem. But as a matter of principle, I just didn't think it was the right thing. So that's why it's called faculty representative.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: So once you're elected vice chair, you're going to be a year as vice chair, and a year as chair of the senate. And for both years, you're a faculty representative. And

what the faculty representatives do is they divide up the committees so that each of them are on half of the committees. I was very happy that Larry took Health Services and Audit, neither of which I wanted to be on. I think I took Labs and Educational Policy, and I don't remember which other ones, what they all were now. Oh, Investments. I remember I did Investments because I remember my first meeting of the Investment Committee, which met off-cycle, by the way, it didn't meet when the regents normally meet. They usually met in LA, which was a real pain because I had to fly down there.

Going to my first Investments Committee meeting, I didn't understand a thing they were talking about. I just didn't understand it. It felt like it was Greek. So afterwards, I went to the treasurer of the university, David Russ. I said, "Look, can I take you to lunch? Can you just brief me on what all of this means?" So we had lunch and he briefed me. It didn't really do it for me. I decided I had to be responsible, so I literally sat down with several books and articles and I actually studied to try to figure out what all the terminology meant, what all the concepts were. What I learned was that none of the concepts were really very hard, or difficult. They just all had their own terminology and shorthand and acronyms. And once you get through the terminology and shorthand, it was all pretty simple stuff. So I actually learned something there. Furthermore, I was armed with understanding of the issues for subsequent meetings.

Serving on Chancellor's Search Committees

One of the first major interactions I had with the regents was by serving on chancellor search committees. Let me go into the three searches that I was a part of, and say a little bit about them. Right after I became vice chair, there were two searches that started. One was in Berkeley and one was in San Diego. The Berkeley search was the one that ultimately

hired Bob Birgeneau,¹⁸⁴ and the San Diego search was the one that ultimately hired Marye Anne Fox.¹⁸⁵

So Larry decided that he would do the Berkeley search, and that I would do the San Diego search. Let me explain a little bit how searches work. Basically, the chair of the regents appoints five regents to be on the search committee, and the chair of the regents serves *ex officio* as a member as well. So there are six regents on the committee. There's five faculty on the committee. All five faculty members are appointed by the president. The three from the campus are based upon recommendations from the campus Committee on Committees. The two systemwide, or the two non-campus faculty members—one of them is always either the chair or vice chair of the systemwide senate, and the other one is a faculty member from another campus, recommended by the university-wide Committee on Committees. And then in addition, a representative of the UC Foundation, of the Alumni Association, of the students and of the staff, are on the search committee. That's the whole search committee.

But the search committee doesn't act cohesively as one. The five faculty on the search committee serve as a key subcommittee of the search committee. They do most of the work. So it is the faculty sub-group which goes through the roughly one thousand names that the search firm gives them to go through to pick out ones that they're interested in. Then they do a little bit more research on the ones they're interested in. They have some discussions, and ultimately try to get the list down initially to about twenty or twenty-five names which then go to the full committee to have a full discussion. Then after that discussion, it goes back to the faculty group to do more work to hone down the list. Ultimately, the faculty group will come back with a list of maybe six to ten names that could be interviewed and that goes back to the full search committee for a discussion. Then, ultimately, the president decides on who gets interviewed. Usually six names would

be a kind of a default number. Then the whole search committee meets with each of those six candidates to interview them. Then they make their individual recommendations to the president, who ultimately makes the choice, which is subsequently confirmed by the regents.

Reti: Years ago, some of the chancellors that we had interviewed said that they never actually came to the campus. Or if they did, it was sort of incognito.

Blumenthal: Oh, no. The interviews are not done on campus.

Reti: They're done at an airport or someplace.

Blumenthal: An airport.

Reti: That's still the case.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And even though the interviews are usually done all in one day, they do it in a way that they're very careful that the candidates don't meet each other.

So, can I tell you an interesting story? It has nothing to do with my story. But I was talking to the head of a search firm once, and he told me this story. The CSU system was interviewing for a CFO, chief financial officer and there were only a few people in the country who had the experience to take on systems as big as that. So they brought their candidates to Los Angeles to do the interview, put them up in different hotels. The interview was to be the next day. But unbeknownst to the search firm, they each knew the other ones, because it's a small community. It was obvious. So they all had dinner together.

Reti: Oh my God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: And they all decided amongst themselves who should get the job.

Reti: (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: But in the chancellor searches that I'm familiar with, nobody ever knew who the other candidates were. And frankly, speaking for myself, I didn't want to know who the other ones were. So that's the process, in a nutshell.

The president's choice is then confirmed by the regents, which make it official. So my first search was in San Diego. The faculty group met a few times on the San Diego campus. One of the interesting things, I guess I can say it now, was that among the San Diego faculty, there was a lot of interest in M.R.C. as a candidate. So that was very interesting. She took the provost position at UC Office of the President before it became an issue.

Anyway, we met. We went through a list of names. For our first meeting with the full search committee, we had a list of about ten names to bring forward. We were hoping to have some more, but the meeting was already scheduled. So we met. It is not untypical for many of the regents not to show up for these meetings. But all of the regents showed up for this meeting. In fact, for San Diego, they showed up to all of the meetings. I didn't really know the regents much at all at that point in time. And like a fool, I had agreed that I would—there were two or three sort of difficult cases to present. So I agreed to do all the tough ones. I figured, what the hell. One of the difficult cases was that of Marye Anne Fox, whose name I can tell you because she was ultimately chosen. Marye Anne, when she was the president of North Carolina State University had been censured by her academic senate. We had just uncovered that information. In every other regard, she was a perfect candidate, had a great record, great grades in terms of her performance, great experience, a scholar of some considerable note. But there was the censure by the senate many years earlier.

So I, with the agreement of the other members of the faculty who were on the committee, presented her case and said that we had classified her as an A case. We'd given her a grade of A as a candidate, which would probably guarantee an interview. But we had not yet checked into this issue of the senate censure. I said that it was possible that we would change our recommendation to an F if we were not satisfied.

Well. Oh my God. One of the regents that was there, who I didn't know at the time, just blew up. He started ranting. He said, "Oh, come on. Are you kidding me? That's all the Academic Senate does is character assassination, tearing people down, being obstructionist. That's all anyone does."

Reti: (laughs) Oh my God.

Blumenthal: He's going on and on, in this rant.

Reti: Who did he think he was talking to?

Blumenthal: He knew who he was talking to. I'm kind of taken aback. And then I look around the room and everybody's looking at me. The regents are looking at me because I'm the representative from the Academic Senate. And the other four faculty are looking at me, basically saying, do something. That's what their looks conveyed. "You're the great leader here. Do something." Well, I wasn't the great leader. I was the brand-new vice chair of the senate, as green as could be. And I didn't even know this guy who was talking to me. It turned out it was George Marcus. He kept going on and on and on about, "Oh, that's all these people in the senate do. They talk all the time. They tear people down. They do character assassination. That's all." He's going on and on along those lines, and he wouldn't stop.

Finally, he stopped and came up for breath. And I had a sudden inspiration. So I said, “Oh! You’re talking about the Academic Senate! I thought you were talking about the Board of Regents!” (laughs)

Reti: Oh, that’s very funny. Did everybody crack up?

Blumenthal: Everybody cracked up. And the president was sitting there laughing, too, by the way.

Reti: What was Marcus’ response to your joke?

Blumenthal: It was okay. I think he may have even laughed, too.

Reti: Oh, good. God, humor is a saving grace.

Blumenthal: Marcus and I ended up becoming good friends. We’re still good friends today. I just had lunch with him a few weeks ago. Although it didn’t start out well, it turned out he was one of the most supportive regents for faculty of all of the regents. But in any event, for me that was a turning point. I mean, I swear to you, you could put me in that situation a hundred times, and ninety-nine other times I wouldn’t think of something to say. But that one time, I just had that inspiration.

Reti: Did you ever get any more insight into where he was coming from?

Blumenthal: He was just mouthing off.

Reti: He was just giving you a hard time.

Blumenthal: Yeah. He liked the candidate, and he was annoyed that—

So in any event, we worked through it and we ultimately came up with a list to interview. I learned a lot from doing those interviews. The night before we did the interviews, I flew

down to San Diego. I went to the hotel restaurant to have dinner. And Peter Preuss,¹⁸⁶ one of the regents was there. Peter was an interesting regent. He was a graduate student at San Diego at the same time I was. He was in math. We didn't know each other. But he was a very successful businessman. So we had a very, very nice dinner together. He made some predictions about what would happen the next day. And it turned out most of his predictions were correct. It was really fascinating. Listening to the different interviews and seeing how they went on was useful

The next chancellor search was at Irvine. That occurred when I was chair of the senate. Ralph was stepping down as chancellor. That was the search that ultimately led to Michael Drake being appointed. I was enthusiastic about Michael as a candidate from the beginning. I had gotten to know him through the chancellor's cabinet. He was then the vice president of medical sciences, or something. What is currently the vice president of Health Affairs, at the time was divided into two positions—one overseeing the hospitals and the other overseeing the medical schools. Michael was the one overseeing the medical schools. I thought Michael was great. I knew Michael had taken a leave to go to Harvard to take one of their courses on management, so I thought that was a good sign as well.

So when the search started, there was some need to do it quickly because the Santa Cruz search was still ongoing, the search where they hired Denice. That search took a year and a third, or a year and a half, something like that. It took forever. I had nothing to do with the Santa Cruz search, I had zero to do with it, and I knew zero confidential information, at least at that time, about the search. I did not talk to the members of the search committee. I knew several of them, but I didn't talk to them about it. But Bob Dynes did talk to me about it and he complained to me on several occasions how long that search was taking and that it was all the fault of the faculty on the search committee. He really let me have it.

So when the Irvine search started, I felt that I had to imbue upon the chair of the faculty group as well that we really needed to make this fast and efficient. We did this in record time. Maybe it's been broken since then, because Janet is much less patient than the previous presidents. But for the time, we got that done really quickly. The faculty did it by dividing up the work. We didn't all have to look at every name—the whole thousand-name list. We broke it up into teams of two, and we agreed that the teams of two would look at the names and that if both agreed, they would either stay on or go off the list. And if they didn't agree, we would bring it back for a discussion. We worked very effectively and efficiently. I was quite impressed with how well we did.

It was interesting that the faculty search committee from Irvine was not supportive of hiring Michael. They really did not like his candidacy. They didn't feel he was research-intensive enough in his background. They were skeptical of having someone who was a physician be the chancellor. They had their own favorite candidate. Everybody knew who that was. It was their EVC.

On the other hand, I was strongly supportive of Michael, as was the other outside member of the faculty group. So we prevailed in keeping his name before the group. And ultimately when the interviews came, the interviews were very instructive to me. Because some of the candidates, in particular the lead candidate for the three faculty from Irvine, did not do a good interview. Really bad interview. Michael did a fantastically good interview. And since I know Bob liked him to begin with, it was a slam dunk that he got appointed.

Michael's early days at Irvine were somewhat rocky. He was not immediately accepted by the faculty there. But eventually he was, and he was very successful. And later moved to Ohio State University for about four times the salary that he was earning at Irvine. So he

moved to a lower-ranked university, but with a much better football team. I think Michael's been happy there. So that was the Irvine experience.

Search for a Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs

My third experience was for the director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Labs. That was actually quite instructive. I had been serving on various lab oversight committees, so I knew a lot about the labs already. And when we went through the list of candidates, or potential candidates, it was a much shorter list for the director of Lawrence Berkeley Lab, but we ultimately narrowed down the list to three people. I won't tell you who the other two were, but they were lab insiders. The third person was Steve Chu, who ultimately was appointed.¹⁸⁷ Steve, at the time, was only—"only," quote unquote—a faculty member at Stanford, but a faculty member who'd won a Nobel Prize. Steve had gotten a Nobel Prize in physics for his work on using lasers to manipulate single atoms. He was known for what you might call small science, science that you could do in a campus lab, whereas the national labs were known for large science, sciences that required a whole laboratory effort.

Anyway, I have to admit to you, I didn't know Steve, and I wasn't wildly enthusiastic about his candidacy when we included his name. I felt like we had to interview him because how do you not interview a Nobel Prize winner who's interested? But I felt as though he had no experience running an organization like that, and no administrative experience to speak of.

So then we came to the interviews. And Steve Chu's interview for director of Lawrence Berkeley National labs, was off-scale the best interview I have ever heard in my life.

Reti: Really?

Blumenthal: Really. He was fantastic. He was visionary, he was exciting. By the end of that interview, everyone in the room was enthusiastic, including, I remember especially Judy Hopkinson's reaction, and she's no easy sale. But we were all enthusiastic about him. In fact, it was difficult, because we had still other interviews to do. But it was clear that nobody was going to come up to his standard. It was a wonderful interview. I remember it so well, because a couple of years later, when I interviewed for the chancellorship at Santa Cruz and I thought about how I was going to do that interview, I decided to do as much as I possibly could to make it like Steve Chu's. So for me, that was actually a very valuable experience. He was off-the-charts good. He turned out to be a great director at Berkeley and later on went to become the Secretary of Energy in the Obama administration. I still run into Steve periodically in kind of unusual places. But he's now back at Stanford. Anyway, for me that was a really good experience.

Moving right along. There was a little interesting incident, which I found kind of interestingly amusing. The Audit Committee met on cycle. I wasn't on the Audit Committee and for me, "audit" is a word that strikes more fear than interest. (Reti laughs) So I was never interested in the Audit Committee and when the Audit Committee met, I usually used that as an opportunity to get coffee or a donut or a bagel or whatever. So I rarely was in the meeting room when the Audit Committee met especially since Larry was there, and Larry and I had an agreement that in any given meeting, one of us had to be in the room. But it didn't have to be two of us.

Anyway, for some reason I wandered into the room when the Audit Committee was meeting and I sat down. I was just sitting at the table, not paying a lot of attention, when an issue came up having to do with faculty discipline at Irvine. It had to do with a faculty member at Irvine who'd misused research funding from two different sources. This person had used funds from one grant to support work on the other grant, and for some

reason I think this had been uncovered during an audit, after which it had gone to the regents, and it looked pretty serious. And so, one of the regents started questioning the chancellor, who was then still Ralph Cicerone, about why the principal investigator hadn't been disciplined, and shouldn't this faculty member have been fired already? Ralph was really having trouble answering that question because they kept pointing out that a staff member would be fired immediately if they did something like that. So I used that as an opportunity to interject myself into the conversation and pointed out that faculty have a different kind of disciplinary process meant to protect academic freedom, and therefore it's a longer and more difficult process, with more checks and balances. It can still be used, but it's not the same as firing a staff member. I wasn't defending this person's misuse of grant funding, but I was saying that it needed to be fully investigated and adjudicated before a committee of the senate, as per the Regents' Standing Order 101, or whatever it was at the time. So that kind of calmed it down. I think afterwards Ralph, who I didn't really know, came over to me and thanked me for having intervened at that moment. I didn't think much of it. It was no big deal.

This was a relatively small incident, I thought, until the next regents meeting, when, for some reason, Ralph was back before the Audit Committee for further discussion on this issue. And it was kind of funny, because I was out getting a bagel, because I just didn't attend regents audit meetings. He insisted that they hold up the issue until I came into the room.

Reti: With your bagel. (laughter)

Blumenthal: I thought that was really funny. I was amused by that. It was kind of cool.

Staff Advisory to the Regents

So the next one is a big one—I'm not sure whether I can complete it in ten minutes—staff advisor to the Regents. So there had been an ongoing issue of whether there should be UC staff input into the board of regents. And there's an organization called CUCSA, the Council of UC Staff Assemblies, which is sort of the uber-body that kind of is above the Staff Advisory Boards on all of the ten campuses. So all campuses send representatives to CUCSA. The two leaders of CUCSA at the time were both named Dave. There was Dave Miller from UCLA, who I think was the vice chair of CUCSA, at least the first year I was on the regents, and then became the chair. And then the other chair was David Bell from UCSF. He was the first staff advisor to the regents, ultimately.

Anyway, there had been some background discussions apparently for some time about the possibility of a staff advisor. But it had never really come strongly to the regents until, I think relatively, roughly middle of my vice chair year. I kind of stumbled into the issue when I walked into Larry's office and he was talking to Bruce Darling. They were talking about the possibility of a staff advisor position to the regents. I do know it was the first time I ever heard of the issue. And I do know that I didn't understand it. I really didn't understand exactly what they were talking about. I thought they were talking about a voting position for a staff member on the regents. I thought that that would be highly problematic, especially if the faculty didn't have a vote. I didn't have an issue with the students having a vote without the faculty, but I did have an issue with the staff having a vote. So I expressed some of my misgivings. But frankly, I really didn't know what was going on. I'd come in halfway through the conversation. I tell you this because I actually think Bruce misunderstood my position as being opposed to the notion of a staff advisor to the regents, which was not the case at all.

Well, the issue started heating up. It was being brought to the regents by Ward Connerly. Connerly was nearing the end of his twelve-year term. He had been, of course, a very controversial regent in many ways. I viewed Ward, and I still view Ward Connerly, as being an extremely interesting character. Because if you consider the universe of all issues, and you divided all possible issues into two groups—one group having to do with affirmative action or race or equality or things like that, and the other group being everything else that's unrelated—I think he was actually a very good regent on everything else. But I think he was a utopian on—well, maybe we're all utopians on issues of race. We want society to be race-blind, and to have true equality and fairness and equity. The difference is that Ward believes that we're there today, and many of the rest of us, certainly I believe, we're still a long, long way from getting there, and that we need to ease the process along to get there.

I actually had a fair amount of respect for Connerly. Unquestionably, he was a firm and avid advocate for there being a staff advisor to the regents and he was not going to let the issue go. He let it be clearly known to the regents that before his term ended, there was going to be a vote on having two staff advisors to the regents.

Reti: Why did he feel so strongly about this?

Blumenthal: He just felt that the staff should have a voice. There was no ulterior motive. He really believed it. And there were others who agreed with him. I know Sherry Lansing strongly agreed with him. So the issue started being discussed among the regents and it was immediately clear that this was going to be very, very controversial. It was also pretty clear that if the regents were going to be asked to vote on this, it was going to be close. I was supportive of the notion of the staff advisor sitting with the regents. But I was also afraid of a close vote. Because the way I figured it was that if the staff advisors won on a

narrow vote, they wouldn't feel very comfortable there, knowing that just a near majority didn't want them sitting at the table. And if they lost, then it would be a recurring issue year after year until something happened. It just seemed to me very unstable to do this as something that would get to a close vote.

Reti: So essentially the controversy hinged on whether staff should have a voice at the table.

Blumenthal: The "at the table" being the key words. And there's already a lot of people at the table. But there were those who felt that no reasonable board of directors would ever have their employee sitting on the board of directors. All of a sudden, kind of, and to my utter astonishment, I was informed that the regents were going to appoint a subcommittee to look at this question. Maybe it happened during a regents meeting. Believe me, I didn't ask for this. But the subcommittee consisted of Ward Connerly, it consisted of George Marcus, and me. Ward Connerly was known as being strongly in favor of this. George Marcus was known for being strongly opposed to this.¹⁸⁸ And then me. I wasn't even a voting regent.

Reti: Oh my God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: We were supposed to meet and figure it all out. (laughter) I felt this was a real dilemma. I didn't know how to solve this because the vote was clearly tied on the committee, one-to-one. I was just in an advisory role, a representative role. So I thought about this. And in thinking about this, before the group had ever met, I realized that I didn't want to have a close vote no matter how it came out. I wanted this to happen, but I wanted it to happen with a strong mandate. Maybe the way to do that was not to go all in with the proposal from Ward and the staff. What CUCSA people wanted was for them to sit at the table and to be participants, members of all of the committees of the regents

forever. I started thinking maybe what we should do is do a two-year test where the proposal wouldn't be to make a permanent change. It would be to make a change for two years that would be evaluated after two years. And I identified two committees that the staff members would sit with, so that it wouldn't be all-pervasive. So I was thinking about this.

When I was faculty representative, even before I was faculty representative, but certainly as faculty representative and later as chancellor, I always worked closely with the student regent. That year, the student regent was Jodi Anderson, a graduate student from UCLA. Jody and I had become friends and we often talked about issues facing the regents and the university. Typically, every few weeks we would have a long conversation as I was driving home from Oakland in the evening. One time, in one of those conversations, she said, "You know, there's a regents meeting in Los Angeles," in six weeks, or two months or whatever. It was a long time ahead. And she said, "Can you tell me, is Kelly coming to it?" My wife. I said, no, why? She said, "Because I'd like to ask you to invite a student to be your guest at dinner." They have a regents dinner, and you can bring a guest, and normally I would bring my wife if she were coming. So she said, "Would you bring a student?" I said no, I can't. Because it turned out that knowing that Kelly wouldn't be there, I'd already invited the chair of the Academic Senate at Los Angeles to join me as my guest for dinner. So she said, "Oh, okay, fine, but I was trying to see if I could get some students to come to the dinner." I said, fine, no big deal.

So lo and behold, a few weeks later, we were talking on the phone, probably about the staff advisor position, which she strongly supported. I kind of casually said to her, "So, Jodi, did you invite a student to be your guest to the dinner?"

She said, “Oh, George, this is embarrassing.” She said, “I just didn’t get my act together to do it.”

Reti: Oh.

Blumenthal: I said, “So, Jodi, why don’t you invite Dave Miller?” Dave Miller was a staff member at UCLA. He was by then the chair of CUCSA and he was the lead staff advocate for the faculty representative position.¹⁸⁹

She said, “That’s a great idea, George. I’ll do it.”

I said, “Great, because I want to talk to Dave.”

So the regents meeting came. We had the regents dinner on campus at some museum and there was a reception beforehand. I found Dave and took him aside and said, “I want to talk with you for a few minutes.” So we kind of went behind a potted plant. (laughter) I remember I said to him, “So, Dave, on this issue of staff advisor, would you consider the possibility of a compromise?”

He was somewhat skeptical, and he said, “What do you mean?”

I said, “Look, what if it was a two-year deal where the regents agreed to try this out for two years, but would revisit the issue in two years, and where it was like two committees that you were members of, so it wasn’t all committees, so it was limited in that sense. The important thing is to keep your eye on the prize and the prize is full membership and permanent membership. This is a camel’s nose under the tent kind of thing. They’re not going to say no to you in two years. And if you’re on two committees, it’s only going to go up.”

So we talked about it for a few minutes and Dave said, “You know, I’m okay with this. But I’m going to have to run it past the leadership of CUCSA.”

I said, “Fine, But let me know and if it flies with them, I’ll bring this to Ward and to George.” So he called me back a few days later and said, “Yeah, everyone will go for this.” So I decided to take the bull by the horn. I was a little intimidated but I did it. I first called Ward and I had a nice conversation with him. He was actually very supportive. He just reminded me he was going to get an item before the regents before he termed out. That was going to happen. But he could accept this as a compromise that might be able to garner enough support. So he was actually very gracious about the idea.

And then I called George, and George was adamantly opposed. He didn’t feel that staff had a role at the board level. He felt very strongly about that and nothing I could say could convince him. So that’s kind of where we left it.

Meanwhile, we had already scheduled a meeting for the three of us. It was a phone conference call and it was the three of us, plus somebody from the regents’ office. Plus sitting in on it, much to my pleasure, was the chief of staff to the president. So we had this meeting, and it was a pretty short meeting because again, we talked about the pros and the cons. Again, Ward said that he was determined; that he could accept my compromise but that was as far as he was willing to go. George said that he couldn’t accept either. We all agreed that we were at an impasse, and that we would have to report this impasse back to the full board. So that ended the phone call. But then after the phone call—by the way, I had discussed this issue and my proposed compromise with the president, who seemed supportive of the staff advisor position. I had also discussed the impasse with him. He wasn’t in the dark. And then his chief of staff said, after the end of the phone call, “Well,

given that the three of you couldn't reach an agreement, the president will introduce this as a president's item. He'll introduce your proposal, George."

And I was elated because at least in those days—it's probably not 100 percent true today—but in those days it was 100 percent true that if the president introduced an item to the board, it was 100 percent certain that it would pass. In fact, that's what happened. The president did introduce it as an item and it did pass. And at the end of the day it was clear that it was going to pass. And so, even some of the others who were opposed to it voted for it, or maybe they were persuaded by my wonderful compromise. But the only dissenting vote was George Marcus. And I want to say this—that two years later when it came up for reconsideration and the proposal was to make this permanent, George took the two staff advisors to lunch and he told them that he had completely changed his mind, that on the basis of the past two years he was now convinced this was a very good idea, and he wanted to graciously admit that he had been wrong two years earlier.

Reti: Well, good.

Blumenthal: So the staff advisors became permanent and now they've expanded their committee presence. They've expanded their presence in a number of ways over the years. Interestingly enough, I've continued to work with the staff advisors. In fact, ever since then, throughout all my years as chancellor, I always have a meeting with the staff advisors a week before every regents meeting to go over the regents agenda and to discuss anything that I know that they might not know and would need to know, or to discuss anything that they might want to raise at the regents meeting. Remember, unlike the faculty representatives who basically work full time on university policy, the staff advisors still have their old jobs to do, so my goal was to help them come up to speed before each

meeting. I've been doing that for thirteen years as chancellor. In fact, now that I'm stepping down, one of their concerns is who is going to do this?

Reti: And do staff have a vote?

Blumenthal: It's not a vote, but they have a voice. As I say, I've been working with them. My goal is to get them admitted to closed sessions of the regents, just like the faculty are. That has so far been unsuccessful, but I harbor significant hope that that will be successful in the near future. And the role has changed dramatically. In the early years of the staff advisors, they were treated very poorly by the regents office. They weren't given access to the regents hotel when the regents went to various sites. They were treated like second-class citizens. I worked with them and we've slowly gotten things changed. They've also worked with various chairs of the regents to try and improve the situation. And I think Dwayne Duckette,¹⁹⁰ who they worked with at the Office of the President, is perhaps more receptive than perhaps earlier people had been with them. So things have definitely been on an upswing in terms of how the staff advisor has operated and been successful. I think there are some real achievements that the staff advisors have accomplished. I'm very proud of the program and as I say, I've worked very closely with all of the staff advisors throughout the history of the program. And they've been grateful to me as well. They made me an honorary member of CUCSA and I think they're even throwing a party for me before my retirement, with all the former staff advisors. So that was one of the things I'm most proud of: helping to get that going. And again, it was really Jodi saying she hadn't invited a guest—that gave me the idea to have that conversation with Dave.

Reti: Well, that's great. Thank you. So we'll stop for today.

UC Compensation

Reti: All right. Today is January 7, 2019. This is Irene Reti. I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our eighteenth session of the oral history we're doing together. Today we're going to continue with talking about your time as faculty representative, specifically on the issues around compensation at the University of California.

Blumenthal: Okay, so one of the things that I did as chair of the senate and as faculty representative of the regents is that I sat as a member of the so-called Regents Agenda-Setting Group. That met sometime, like a few weeks, before every regents meeting. It was chaired by the president. It included all the vice presidents. It included the senate chair. We would sit around and go through the proposed regents' agenda and approve what should go on the regents' agenda, or maybe not. Now admittedly, theoretically that's a function for the regents. But the president basically did that in support of the regents. I think the regents' secretary was there and she played an important role in the meeting, although I remember it as Bob Dynes who played the lead role.

I was generally a fairly passive member of that group, except in a couple of instances. I know one of the things that I used to rant and rave about at every regents' agenda-setting meeting was how unrealistic their agendas were, in terms what could be accomplished. They'd often put down far more things— I knew they would never get to all of the items. I said "Either you've got to choose the order in such a way that your least important ones are last, or maybe you should consider just putting a timeframe down and saying, we will spend fifteen minutes on this item. Period." I used to argue that all the time and I never got anywhere. So that was a complete failure and completely worthless.

Executive Compensation

The other big issue centered around executive compensation. So before one regents meeting—and it was several weeks before the regents meeting—they brought in a regents item on compensation. This was at a time when the budget of UC had been cut, when we'd had staff layoffs, when I think there may have been no pay increase for staff at the university, etcetera. They were proposing a number of salary increases for senior administrators, particularly senior administrators at UCOP. The argument was made that, for a whole variety of reasons, these people had taken on extra duties and therefore they deserved to be compensated for the extra duties that they had taken on.

When this got to the regents' agenda-setting meeting, which is the first time I saw it, I took great exception to that item. Basically, the first thing I said to Bob was I thought many of these proposed increases were highly questionable. I said I didn't see on the papers in front of us a reasonable justification for those increases, and such justifications had to be there if this was going to go forward.

He agreed. He said, "Yes, we need to have justifications to make this work."

"But more than that," I said, "We are living at a time when a lot of staff are getting laid off. A lot of staff aren't getting increases. And the budget of the university is being cut. So the idea of giving significant increases to various senior managers who already earn very, very, very large salaries, in order to compensate them for their additional work, just doesn't sit very well and I think is not something that I can support. I don't think the regents should support it, either. I think this is very dangerous grounds we're on."

Reti: And of course many staff—the ones who had not been laid off, were doing the jobs of two people.

Blumenthal: Of course. I even said that. I even said that.

Right now in the university, we have a vice president for health sciences. But in those days, that position was divided in two. There was a vice president in charge of hospitals and there was a vice president in charge of medical matters. The medical matters vice president was Michael Drake at the time. But the guy who was the vice president of hospitals was furious at me. He got really angry at me for raising this issue. Dynes didn't get angry. But this guy did. He really tore into me for objecting to this. I was kind of shocked at the—I don't want to say vicious, because that sounds too extreme—I was shocked at the vigor with which he defended current practice and questioned why I could reasonably be questioning this item. But I stuck to my guns. I really tried to make the point that this simply wasn't something that made sense, that it would offend a lot of people within the university. I said that the price of doing this is just not worth it. So that's where it ended.

An interesting footnote to that meeting. There were four staff members in the meeting. There was the president's chief of staff; there was another woman who worked in the president's immediate office. I had never exchanged a word with her, and I always assumed she was pretty unfriendly to me, because she would never make eye contact or anything. So I figured for one reason or another she didn't like me. She sent me the nicest note after that meeting. She said, "I was so pleased that you kept raising that issue. I think you were absolutely right." In fact, I got notes from each of the four staff members. Another one was a very senior staff member, I think an associate vice president, who worked for one of the vice presidents. And then the fourth staff member, I can't remember who it was, but it may have been from the regent's office. But I couldn't believe it. I got four notes from the four staff members in the room, all thanking me for raising that issue.

I think I may have discussed this with the Academic Council prior to the regents meeting, just to make sure they were onboard with my viewpoint. And then the regents meeting started approaching. In fact, I'm sure I must have done this with Academic Council, I'm positive I did because I had my usual meetings with M.R.C. Greenwood before council, and with the president before council. My meeting with M.R.C. Greenwood was at eleven o'clock. My meeting with Bob Dynes was at one o'clock. (Weird that I should remember this, right?) (Reti laughs) The reason I remember this is because I remember M.R.C.—and just as an aside, I didn't even regard this as a particularly important issue—but as an aside, I had mentioned that I was considering at the regents meeting speaking against this proposal on senior management. And M.R.C. said, "No, no, you can't do that."

I said, "I have to be honest. I have to do the right thing."

M.R.C. was really upset with me. In fact, when I raised the issue with her, she said, "Surely, you're not going to raise this at the regents meeting."

I said, "Actually, I might."

So I had my meeting with M.R.C. Then I went out to lunch. I came back for my one o'clock with Dynes. As I walked into the one o'clock with Dynes, I saw M.R.C. leaving. And I knew; I knew what had happened. I knew she had gone down there to warn him about Blumenthal and what he was going to do.

So I had my meeting with Dynes. As always, it was very pleasant. We went through our agenda. Then at a certain point I said to him, "Look, I have to talk to you about this senior management compensation item. I'm really seriously considering objecting to it at the regents meeting."

We talked about it for a little while. He finally said to me, “Look, I’ll be honest with you. I would prefer that you not object to it. But I’m certainly not mad if you do it. I understand your principles.” I thought that was perfectly reasonable. I didn’t have a problem with that. I think M.R.C. was far more upset with me than Dynes was.

So I raised it with council. Council, I think, was supportive of my raising this concern. So then the regents meeting came. Now I was not thrilled to be in this position. And the way senior management salaries are done at regents meetings, they’re discussed twice, actually theoretically, three times. They’re first discussed in the relevant committee. Today it’s the Compensation Committee; I think in those days, it might have been a differently named committee. But it was essentially the committee that deals with compensation in closed session. Then there’s a subsequent meeting of that same committee in open session. And then, of course, at the end of the regents meeting, the regents meet as a whole board to approve all of the committee recommendations.

So we met in closed session. And that particular meeting was chaired by Dick Blum, which concerned me because I knew Dick would not be supportive of what I was going to say. I was sure Judy Hopkinson would not be supportive of what I was going to say. And I didn’t think the regents in general would be supportive of what I was going to say. I thought I would be quite unpopular, but I felt like I had to do it.

Somehow the item in closed session got put off for a while. I was getting really alarmed that they were not even going to open it up for discussion. It was clear that Dick was maneuvering somehow, but eventually it came up. And before anyone could do anything, I put my hand up. But he didn’t look at me. I said, “Dick, I want to speak to this.” And so I was the first speaker. I basically gave my same little spiel about how I didn’t think it was

fair; I didn't think it was reasonable; it would be taken very badly by staff, particularly staff whose workload had increased because of layoffs.

Interestingly enough, I got interrupted once by Sherry Lansing,¹⁹¹ who was sitting next to me. Sherry was a strong advocate of the staff advisor to the regents position. And she basically said, "You know, you should not be making these statements." I thought she was going to be very hostile. But she said the reason I shouldn't be making these statements is there should be a staff person here making those statements.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I still remember that. Anyway, I made my case. I finished. They started calling on other people. I was sitting across the table from both Dick, who was clearly not supportive, and from Judy Hopkinson, who had a very unhappy look on her face with me. I knew Judy wouldn't be happy with me. I kind of figured there was no way the regents would agree.

So literally, as soon as I finished, I picked up a pad of paper and I decided I would start sketching out what I was going to say in public session because I didn't think I could be quite as hard-hitting in public session. I had to be a little bit more diplomatic.

And then, to my utter surprise, the first person who spoke after I did was Ward Connerly. He said, "I think George has it right. I think these should not go through." And several other speakers in a row spoke, and they all basically agreed with me. I was shocked! And finally, I think Joe Mullinix, who was then the vice president, came up to the table and said, "Look, we'll have to go through the list. Maybe we should just pull out the ones that shouldn't go forward." So I don't think that they necessarily took a vote per se, but it was clear from the discussion that it wasn't going to pass. Of course, I felt pretty good about that. I'm sure not everyone felt good about that. But I felt it was the right thing to do. And

I give credit to Bob. I give a lot of credit to Bob. In a sense, he lost face in that interaction. But I never felt he held it against me, nor did I ever feel that he really pushed me not to do this. He said he would prefer that I not, but that he understood that I might feel compelled, which was entirely right. I could see myself saying that to somebody.

So that was a small victory. And interestingly enough, this happened before all of the compensation scandals. If only they had listened to me. (laughs)

Reti: That's what I was sitting here thinking. (laughs)

Blumenthal: No, seriously.

Reti: Yeah, because it really hit the fan later.

Blumenthal: There was a lack of understanding of body politic, in a sense, of the state and of the university. There was just a feeling that the way we were doing business for twenty years is the way we could continue doing business. It was so obvious to me that we couldn't.

Reti: I find it so interesting, because this was happening in the mid-2000s and we'd been having a budget crisis significantly affecting the university at least since the early '90s, and certainly longer than that. The political support for the university is so important at the legislative level, so I don't understand how they could be supporting a position which would most likely be unprofitable with legislators: raising people's salaries at the highest level. It's quite interesting.

Blumenthal: It really is quite interesting. And, of course, the chapter continues, and we'll get to that in a few minutes—the chapter of compensation scandals. Anyway, I was impressed that I had the influence that I did at that particular moment. I was pleased I didn't have to say anything in public.

After the meeting, Joe Mullinix came up to me with this list of all of the proposed increases. There were like a couple dozen of them. He said, "Well, which ones do you find objectionable?" I didn't feel comfortable. There were some that I thought were obviously wrong. There were some that I thought were obviously right. But I didn't know exactly where that boundary should be. I thought it was just weird, like they were just kowtowing to me. But I wasn't the guy who should be making those choices. I wasn't going to argue around the margins, you know what I mean?

Reti: No. That would take some careful review, probably, by somebody who really knew those positions. It's inappropriate.

Blumenthal: So anyway, that was one thing that came out of the regents' agenda setting. The other thing that came out of regents agenda setting actually didn't come out of regents agenda setting, per se. But typically what I would do is the night before the regents' agenda-setting meeting, or the day before, I would have a meeting with Lori Hoffman. She was the associate vice president for business affairs at the university. The curious thing about Lori is that Lori and I were, as well as Maria, were often the last three people to leave the building, or certainly to leave the twelfth floor. She worked very late in her office; Maria and I worked very late in our offices. So it wasn't at all uncommon for Lori and me to meet up to talk about something after hours, if I was just wandering around, or going to the bathroom.

Issues with Senate Approval of UCSC's Ranchview Terrace

Lori normally the day before these meetings gave me a briefing. That particular meeting, that briefing couldn't take place during regular hours, so we met like at six o'clock or something. I remember it was in the evening. We were going through the agenda, and we got to Ranchview Terrace at UCSC. Ranchview Terrace had been in process for a long time

and it was finally going to the regents for approval. So when I saw a Ranchview Terrace item, I said to Lori, "This is great! I've been waiting for a long time for this. I'm really pleased and I'm sure the senate's really pleased that this is going to the regents."

She kind of grimaced a little bit and said something less than enthusiastic to me. I forget exactly what she said.

I looked at her and I remember saying, "Okay, spill. Tell me what's going on here. Why are you reacting the way that you are?"

She said, "Because there's some weird stuff in here."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "Well, for example, one of the things that they're doing is they're building a community center, and above the community center, they're going to have a few apartments."

I said, "Okay, so? So what?"

And she said, "Well, that community center and those apartments are going to be paid for by the people who buy houses at Ranchview Terrace."

I said, "Okay. So what's wrong with that?"

She said, "Well, the rents from those apartments are going to the university."

I said, "Wait a minute. Are you telling me that the faculty and staff who buy houses will be building this center and building these apartments but get no financial benefit from these apartments?"

She said, "Yes, that's what I'm telling you. That's what I thought was strange."

I said, “Well, was the Academic Senate consulted on this?”

She chose her words very carefully. She said, “I was told that they were consulted about this.”

Well, I was skeptical. I have to give her credit. She was clearly giving me the hints. So the next morning, as soon as I got to my office, I called Alison Galloway and asked Alison about it. Alison had no idea what I was talking about. This was completely news to her.

Then I called Mary-Beth. Mary-Beth Harhen was then the executive director of the senate at UCSC. I talked to her and she didn’t know what I was talking about, either. I was really upset because if neither of them knew about senate consultation, then there was no senate consultation.

So a couple of hours later, I get a call from Onuttom Narayan¹⁹² who is a faculty member here, and who was then the chair of the Committee on Faculty Welfare. Onuttom’s really angry. He said he wanted to bring a bunch of faculty up to the regents meeting to protest this item. He said, “Can I bring twenty-five faculty members? Is that enough? Or do you want me to try to bring fifty?”

I said to him, “No, no, no, no.” I said, “Onuttom,” I don’t think you need to bring anyone.” The regents agenda-setting meeting may have just taken place. But I said to him, “Onuttom, I will get the item pulled from the agenda if we can’t get satisfaction on this.”

Then I contacted the chancellor’s office. I didn’t speak to Marty, but I left a message.

Reti: Marty Chemers is acting chancellor by this time?¹⁹³

Blumenthal: Yes. I don’t remember who I spoke to. It wasn’t Marty. I basically said, “Look, this has to get resolved with the senate. One of two things is going to happen.”

(laughs) I don't always talk this way, but I said, "I really expect you to consult with the senate and get senate sign-off on whatever plan you have here for Ranchview Terrace, in particular about these apartments. But if you cannot get senate sign-off and senate agreement, then I'll have the item pulled from the regents agenda. I don't have the power to do that, but I have the influence to do that."

They immediately initiated discussions with the senate. They came to some agreement. Honest to God, I don't even remember what the agreement was. I didn't care. To be honest with you, I didn't care what the agreement was. I just cared that there *be* an agreement. I don't remember whether they stopped the apartments, or whether they agreed that the money from the rents would defray the cost of the houses that paid for it.

But ultimately, there was an agreement. And as a result, they had to change the item at the last minute after it had already been published to the regents agenda. They did come to an agreement, which I give them credit for. And it was fine. When it actually went to the regents—the item was presented. I didn't plan to say anything about the item. And there wasn't a lot of discussion of it, except by Ward Connerly, who took great umbrage at the fact that the item had been changed between the time it had been published and the time that the regents meeting occurred because they walked in a new and modified item. He was trying to press them about why they had modified the item, etcetera. I don't think they wanted to give the complete answer to that question. But eventually, it did get approved and it did go through.

But my threat was serious. I really would have gotten that item pulled. It was the only time I remember as senate chair when I did anything that was explicitly Santa Cruz-centric. I tried to be as ecumenical as I could possibly be in that role. But in any event,

that's what happened. That's the Ranchview Terrace story, which we'll come back to in a little while.

Long-Range Guidance Team

The last thing I wanted to mention about faculty representative to the regents was one of the things I got appointed to, which I continued on after my term had ended, was the Long-Range Guidance Team. The regents put together a group, which was mostly regents, to come up with a long-term plan for the university. It was called the Long-Range Guidance Team.

Reti: Interesting name.

Blumenthal: It was an interesting name. It wasn't all that different from what happened a few years later, which was the Gould-Yudof report.¹⁹⁴ But this was a precursor to that. We met many times as a group and ultimately wrote a report with a number of recommendations, some of which were worthwhile, and some maybe not so much. I don't remember the procedure being all that fraught. We had a bunch of meetings. I remember Judy Hopkinson was on the group, I remember Cliff Brunk was on the group. We made some reasonable recommendations, nothing too earth-shattering. But I remember one of the meetings in particular, and I will come back to that meeting in a few minutes. But anyway, this ends the faculty representative to the regents section.

So now I'd like to start to talk about the year between leaving the chair of the Academic Senate and faculty representative to the regents, and the time that I was appointed acting chancellor. There are a fair number of things to talk about during this year.

But first, let me just say that when I stepped down as chair of the senate, I wanted to stay out of the way of my successor. That was my goal. I wanted to more or less separate myself

from the Office of the President for a while, and from the regents. I really didn't think it was appropriate for a former chair to play that big a role. I also wanted to get my own research back on track. I was starting to teach again. I had a number of responsibilities for my department. For example, I remember I did the qualifying exams that year, etcetera.

And then the Academic Senate here asked me if I would serve as the assembly representative for the campus, which seemed to me a very good role for me. It meant that I didn't have a lot of responsibilities on campus, but I was certainly familiar with the systemwide issues. I think the real reason why they wanted me to do that was because ex officio I was then on the Senate Executive Committee, so they really were hoping that I would be a member of the Senate Executive Committee.

So I was doing all of that, and trying to reinvigorate my own research program at the same time. With regard to staying out of the affairs of the systemwide senate, that proved to be a complete failure. And that was largely due to Cliff Brunk.

“Just When I Thought I Was Out, They Pull me Back in!”¹⁹⁵

My intention when I left on September first was to wait three or four weeks. Then I was going to call Maria, just in a friendly way, and ask her how things were going. Well, I probably got my first call from a member of the senate staff two days after I left, to talk about some of the stuff that Cliff was doing. At first, the calls I got from staff members and Academic Council members were relatively infrequent: every few days. But as you'll hear, as the months moved on, I was literally getting at least one call every day. The issues I heard about fell into two categories—one dealing with treatment of staff and the other arising from Cliff's reluctance to represent the consensus of the Academic Council.

An example of the latter arose relatively early in the year. The regents were taking up a regents item called RE61 that had to do with compensation. An interesting thing about RE61 was that it had several elements to it. RE61A was a statement by the regents that they planned over the next ten years to raise all faculty salaries and all staff salaries up to a level that was comparable: in the case of faculty to our comparison institutions, and in the case of staff to our local markets. They recognized that their salaries were below market for both faculty and staff. It was a ten-year promise by the regents to raise those. That passed maybe unanimously, I don't remember. I don't think it was particularly controversial at the time. Interestingly enough, jumping ahead ten years, ten years later I was, of course, chancellor, and I took it upon myself to remind several people both in the senate and the regents of the existence of RE61A, which everyone had conveniently forgotten by then. Because actually in the case of faculty, if you look at faculty salaries, we were just as far behind ten years later as we were at the beginning of that ten-year period, at least in terms of percentage of salary behind our comparison institutions. In the case of staff, it's always more complicated, because you have to compare staff position by staff position. But clearly, we had not made a lot of progress.

Anyway, RE61A was not a big problem. The big issue was RE61B. RE61B was a proposal by the regents that they supplement chancellorial salaries with private funds, funds raised from foundations or whatever. This had not been done before. The reason they were interested in doing this was because chancellor salaries have always been and always will be controversial. The idea was that if some part of the salary were not paid with state dollars, but was instead paid with philanthropic dollars, that it wouldn't be nearly as controversial.

Of course, duh, that's not going to happen. Nobody's going to make that distinction. But nevertheless, regents and administrators thought it would make a public relations

difference. I might add historically, at a certain point the university did start doing that. And today, when they make appointments, there often is a part of the salary that is covered by private philanthropy. For better or for worse, that's what the university does today. I think Janet Napolitano's most recent appointments have included that. I don't know whether the Santa Cruz chancellor one will or not. I suspect not.

Reti: And is the chancellor expected to raise that money themselves?

Blumenthal: Well, therein lies the problem. Of course, the chancellor can't be expected to raise that money himself or herself. That would be horribly conflictual, a conflict of interest to the nth degree. So, of course not. On some campuses, it's the foundation that raises that money. But clearly, even if the chancellor doesn't do that, there are questions about whether or not those funds would have gone to other things, had they not been designated for that purpose. I mean, it's still, in a way, conflictual, even if it isn't explicitly conflictual for the chancellor her or himself.

So anyway, a lot of faculty, myself included, were not thrilled with RE61B. I heard through my contacts on the Academic Council that several council members wanted to put it on the agenda for the Academic Council to discuss, to see whether or not the senate should take a position officially on RE61B. Cliff refused. He refused to include it on the agenda. People were really upset. And it really upset me, because when I chaired council, any council member could put any item they wanted to on the agenda. I always was willing to accommodate them. Cliff adamantly refused to put this on the agenda, and argued that his role as faculty representative to the regents was distinct from his role as senate chair, so he could take a position on the issue based solely on his own experience and knowledge.

Well, that kind of annoyed me. So I decided that I would thwart Cliff because I thought this was a legitimate item for the senate to weigh in on. So fortunately, having rewritten

all of the bylaws of the Academic Senate, (Reti laughs) I *knew* the bylaws of the Academic Senate. And I knew that, although I couldn't force anything on the Academic Council, I could, by a petition, get any item on the agenda of the Academic Assembly, which is the parent body. It only takes four signatories to get an item on the agenda.

We had an assembly meeting coming up. So I decided to do it. I quickly wrote an item for the assembly agenda to discuss and take a position on RE61B. Then I thought about it. Well, there're sixty members of the assembly. Maybe eighteen, maybe, are members of the Academic Council. I didn't want any member of the council to sign because they worked so closely with Cliff. So I went to three other assembly members who I knew best. I went to Quentin Williams, who was then the vice chair at Santa Cruz, on the assembly. I went to Larry Pitts at San Francisco, who was on the assembly. And I went to another faculty member I knew at San Francisco. I asked each of them whether they would agree to sign onto the petition. They all agreed. I got no pushback whatsoever. The first three people I asked all agreed to sign on.

So I submitted a formal petition for inclusion on the Academic Assembly agenda. Of course, I heard very quickly through my contacts that that was not well received in the chair's office in Oakland. But I felt it was necessary, I thought it was a legitimate part of shared governance for the senate to weigh in on an issue like that. And, of course, the issue was exactly what you raised before, the potential conflict of interest.

So the assembly meeting came and there was no choice. By then, Cliff had changed his mind and brought it to council, who came up with a different statement than mine, but basically in agreement. When we had the assembly meeting, I was very happy to withdraw my item, since council had another item that was on the agenda for discussion at that point.

Around the same time, I was hearing more and more about the degradation in morale among the senate staff in Oakland. Eventually, I heard that a staff member had filed a complaint with UCOP Human Resources making certain allegations, which I will not discuss here. Based upon my understanding of university policy, there should have been a prompt investigation of those allegations by UCOP HR. But nothing happened for several months, and nobody knew what progress had been made on the investigation. Meanwhile, I was getting a steady stream of confidential phone calls from staff.

Finally, some of the staff began making plans to leave the senate office. At that point, I decided to be more proactive. I spoke with Larry Pitts about what was going on. Larry was so concerned that he went to UCOP the next day to speak personally with staff members he'd worked with. After that, Larry and I agreed we needed to take some immediate action.

So Larry and I wrote a letter to President Dynes expressing our extreme dissatisfaction with the inaction at UCOP and their seeming inability to resolve this situation. We also asked for a meeting with Dynes to discuss this. Before sending the letter, I actually informed general counsel that this letter would be sent, and to my surprise there was no objection to our sending it – only to our assertion that UCOP was not taking appropriate action, an assertion we kept in the letter.

So a few days later, Bob Dynes met with Larry and me. Quite appropriately, he did not share any of the details of the investigation with us. After all, we had no official standing other than being members of the Assembly. But we wanted assurance that he would take appropriate action to protect staff members, which he assured us would happen. The other purpose of our meeting with him was to inform him that we had decided to write a letter to the members of the Academic Council informing them of what was going on and

urging them to do their own independent investigation. We argued that they had a legitimate need to know. It turns out Bob was pleased that we were going to do this. Although he has authority over all the staff at UCOP, he has much less authority over the leadership of the senate. So he was pleased at the notion that the senate would police itself.

Subsequently, the Provost (Rory Hume) took some specific and reasonable steps to protect staff members in that office. And Larry and I did send our letter to all Council members, including Cliff, who was furious at our action. The Council did form an investigative group to look at both the relationship with staff and the issue of whether the Council's and Assembly's positions were being appropriately represented by Cliff. Of course, Larry and I had no role in that investigation.

Reti: George, who was vice chair?

Blumenthal: John Oakley.

Reti: Okay. What was going on with him? Was he involved in this?

Blumenthal: Well I spoke with John about this. John was in a very awkward position. He was the vice chair to Cliff. Clearly if Cliff were to be removed or something like that, John would succeed to be chair. But John was going to be chair anyway. John, of course, was a law professor, and knows procedures well. He is also an extremely ethical man. But he felt that he couldn't be very active in this, because this would be like regicide by the vice chair, so he had to be very careful in what he did.

So finally, the Academic Council investigation committee made a recommendation that there would be a special meeting called of the Academic Assembly, with the agenda item of whether or not Cliff should be removed from office. So that's what happened. We had

a meeting of the Academic Assembly, in Oakland. Well-attended. It was decided to make it a closed meeting of the assembly. Usually the assembly's open, but we made this one a closed meeting. There was some press interest, but we wouldn't allow them in. With Cliff's agreement, John Oakley chaired the meeting, which lasted many hours. At the end of the day, the Assembly voted overwhelmingly – something like 58-2 – to remove Cliff from office.

So Cliff left office and John became the chair of the senate. When Michael Brown was confirmed by the assembly (maybe he'd already been confirmed, I just don't remember), he was added as the vice chair of the senate. So he took office early as well, and Cliff went back to UCLA.

I saw Cliff one more time, and that was at the inauguration of Gene Block at UCLA. He was in the front row, cheering on Gene Block's inauguration, which was fine. I think I even ran into him at the reception and we said hello to each other. We were polite to each other. I have no idea where he is today. Surely he must be retired, because he's older than I am by at least several years, and I'm no spring chicken anymore.

So Cliff left office and John became the chair of the senate. When Michael was confirmed by the assembly (maybe he'd already been confirmed, I just don't remember), he was added as the vice chair of the senate. So he took office early as well and Cliff went back to UCLA. I think he filed some grievance about probably the financial things that happened to him. My sense is that they settled somehow with him. I don't know the details, nor do I particularly care.

Compensation Gate

Blumenthal: Okay. Next, why don't we talk about Compensation Gate?

So I'm back at Santa Cruz, minding my own business, (Reti laughs) and I get a call from Tanya Schevitz¹⁹⁶, who was then the main higher education reporter at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. I'd spoken with Tanya many times as senate chair. She called me a fair amount and I would give her quotes or whatever. I was always very open with the press when I was senate chair. I think we did discuss the *San Diego Union* story on regental attendance.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: She called me up because she said she had a story she was going to run. It was a big story, and she couldn't get anyone to give her a quote, so she was hoping that I would give her a quote that she could use.

I said, "Sure. What's the story?"

And she said, "I found," and I can't remember the numbers, something like 800 million dollars of inappropriate over-compensation at the University of California.

I said, "What?!"

She said, "Yeah. I've got all the compensation data. It's all been released to us by Freedom of Information. And last year there was 800 million dollars in excess compensation. It's a huge scandal. I'm looking for a quote from you as a former chair of the senate about what you think about that."

I said, "Wait a minute, Tanya. You know, if you told me you'd scoured the entire UC system and you found three million dollars of excess compensation, I would be embarrassed for the system, but I would have thought it plausible, at the three-million dollar level—out of a budget of 20 billion dollars, I could imagine that could be the case. I don't believe 800 million dollars."

Reti: What is excess compensation?

Blumenthal: Well, that, of course, is the question. She said inappropriate excess compensation.

I said, "So what does this include?"

And she said, "Oh, I've got all the data."

I said, "Well, wait a minute. Does this include summer salary for faculty members who get grants?" She said yeah.

I said, "Well, yeah, that's compensation in excess of their state support. But we encourage faculty to get grants to support their summer salary. This is a good thing. This isn't a bad thing. This is not something that's a scandal. This is business as usual at every American university. It shouldn't be included in there." And I said, "Well, what about the medical school? I know that the A part of the X factor in medical school salaries," you probably don't even know what I'm talking about. For faculty at medical schools, their salary is the sum of X plus Y plus Z.

Reti: Oh, you did talk about this earlier.

Blumenthal: And of the X part, A, which comes from the state, is only a piece of even the X part. So the state salary that goes to medical faculty is a tiny fraction, or a small fraction of their total salaries. So I said, "Are you counting the Y and the Z and the extra factor in the X salaries of medical faculty?" And she said, yeah.

I said, "But of course you can't," I said, "We would never be able to hire a single medical school faculty member on just the state salary alone. It would be so far out of competitiveness, we'd never have a single faculty member in the medical schools. That's

completely appropriate. That is the way business is done. It's not inappropriate. It's not a scandal."

She said, "Well, that's in there and it's extra salary that they're getting. This is all extra salary."

And I also asked her if the total included supplemental salary paid by the national laboratories managed by UC to their staff. She said it was included, and I pointed out that this extra salary comes from the federal government and complies with strict federal regulations.

I said, "Tanya, I cannot give you a quote about how horrible this is because I actually think this isn't a scandal. I think this is business as usual, and completely appropriate business as usual for the university. And I think it's really unethical for you to be running this story, lumping together this with possibly inappropriate extra compensation."

And so we left friendly, but I wouldn't give her a quote, and I was encouraging her not to run the story.

Of course, the next day she ran the story. I think Tanya was looking for her Pulitzer Prize. She ran the story. The university was completely inept in terms of their response to the story that she ran. It took the university like a month to put up a website that detailed all the components of this extra compensation that she had mentioned. It's not like I'm a genius, right? It's not like I have this huge or tremendous sense. Any reasonable person would have thought to ask those questions. It should have been responded to immediately and forcefully, and yet we failed to do it. So it took on a life of its own. And that exacerbated all of the cases that had happened since, where they were doing extra compensation and raises for senior management at the Office of the President. Because once I left, the restrictions were off. And that just made it all that much worse.

And, of course, the *Chronicle* kept talking about that story even after it was debunked. It was kind of surreal. That was the start of the real public compensation scandal at UC. It was ultimately the thing that did in Dynes. In fact, at that point, newspapers were calling for his head over that. The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* wrote an editorial calling for his head. I was incensed by the *Sentinel* article. I decided to write a letter to the editor, which is not something I would normally have done as a faculty member, but I felt compelled to do it. I wrote a letter to the editor basically pointing out all of the good things Dynes had done, without necessarily saying this was a good thing, or it wasn't a bad thing, but that we had to take a measure of the totality. They actually published it, somewhat to my surprise.

Reti: To what do you attribute this lack of response, or this very delayed response?

Blumenthal: Incompetence. I knew at the time what the university did was inadequate, but I think I understand it much better today. When something like this happens, you have to respond immediately and you have to respond in certain ways. The standard formula for responding to these kinds of things is you get twenty-seven words.

Reti: Twenty-seven!

Blumenthal: Seriously. That's what the people who teach about these things, say. Your crisis message has to be really on point. It has to acknowledge the concerns, and rebut what needs to be rebutted. And you've got to do that in twenty-seven words.

Reti: Right. So you don't put up a big chart of numbers a month later that you expect people to look at and analyze.

Blumenthal: Right. And you have to show some sympathy with the position of those who were raising it. The example was the oil spill in the Gulf. The president of that company, some guy in England, talked about, "Oh, I got better things to do with my

weekend than to be—” That is an example of the worst possible thing you could say, to make it personal. A good response is right on point. It shows sympathy. It shows an acknowledgement of the issue, and then gives a substantive response to it. And it’s done quickly. They didn’t do that and it cost them a lot. And I think it led to Dynes’ downfall, which I’ll talk a little bit more about later. So anyway, that was a big thing that I dealt with.

Controversy over Regents’ Use of Town Cars

Since we’re talking about the press, I guess I should talk about the town cars.

Reti: Town cars?

Blumenthal: Yeah. (laughs) So Tanya called me another time because she was running a story which even she said was a little story—it wasn’t a big deal—but she wanted a quote. It had to do with the fact that she’d investigated the fact that when the regents met, the regents’ office hired a bunch of town cars to pick up regents at the airport and drive them to the hotel. Then there would be town cars at the hotel to drive regents from the hotel to the regents meetings. She had done some calculations and discovered that this was extremely expensive, that if the regents office had rented a sports car for every regent when they arrived at the airport, it would be cheaper than using the town cars. And so, the town cars really were a waste of taxpayer resources. She wanted a quote from me. Even though I had ridden in those town cars between my hotel and regents meetings, I thought it was a legitimate issue, so I gave her a quote which basically said something like, “Regents work very, very hard for free. But nevertheless, even the regents office needs to be careful about expenses, especially given the financial challenges that the university is facing.” So it wasn’t that big a deal what I said, but I did give her a quote.

Well, the next day, I got a scathing email from John Moores. I don't know if he was still chair of the regents. He may have termed off by then. But he was still a regent. A scathing email, which he copied to all of the other regents, and to the president and vice presidents, basically saying, "Come on, you've got to know better." It was a scathing email, far out of proportion to anything that I might have said. It really, really upset me. It upset me because, first of all it was so scathing. It upset me because he had copied everyone. If he had just sent me a personal note, I wouldn't have minded so much. But he copied all of the regents. I felt it was affecting my reputation within the university. I was just a faculty member by that point, but who knew what the future would bring?

Reti: Indeed.

Blumenthal: It really, really upset me. So I decided that I needed to respond to him and copy the other regents. I contacted the regents office. I had gotten this email through the regents office, which is the way most regents communicate with people. I said I wanted to respond to John's email. They said fine, "We'll be happy to send a response to him." I said I also wanted it copied to the regents. And they refused, because that isn't their policy. They won't let people do that. So I had this big argument with them. Finally I was able to talk to Ann Shaw, who was then serving, I think, as the acting secretary to the regents. Ann was reasonable. I made a case to Ann. I said, "Ann, I don't even need to argue with you." I said, "I have every regent's private email address." I may have been missing one or two, but I've got connections. I could get those. It wouldn't be hard at all for me to do that. "So I'm not asking you this because I need you to agree; I'm asking you this because I think it's the right way to go. If I received the message through the regents office, it seems to me appropriate to respond through the regents office, especially since someone else being in my position without my access to email addresses wouldn't be able to. If you tell

me, “No, I’m not going to do it, then I’ll write to their private email addresses. But I just don’t think it’s the right thing to do.”

So she agreed that she would ask the chair of the regents whether or not it was okay to send it. I think by then the chair was Gerry Parsky,¹⁹⁷ and Parsky agreed, so she contacted me. She said, “Okay, if you send me the email, I will make sure that not just John, but all of the other regents get it.”

So I drafted up some email to John, basically pushing back on him and pointing out that my remarks were in no way disrespectful to the regents. I don’t know what I said, but I tried to temper the criticism with, or trying to respond to the criticism, the kind of bitter criticism that was in John’s email.

I sent it, and that was kind of the end of the story. Except lo and behold, a few months later, I’m suddenly the acting chancellor, and I’m going to my first regents meeting wondering how are my interactions with John going to be. I showed up at the meeting and I saw John and I went over to say hello to him. He came over to say hello to me. I have to say, the first words out of his mouth were, “Nice to see you, George. But I have one question for you.”

I said, “What’s that?”

He said, “Did you take a town car to the meeting today?”(laughter) That kind of broke the ice.

Reti: You said, “No, I rode my bicycle.” (laughter) Oh, gosh.

Blumenthal: I might add that the regents very soon stopped using town cars. Now to the extent that the regents office transports regents, they use shuttles from UCSF, or from

whatever campus they happen to be meeting on, which is I'm sure the cheapest way that they can do it.

Chancellor Review

We're almost out of time for today, but this is a small matter. To me, it's interesting. One of the things that the Academic Senate does systemwide is to review chancellors. And so at the time I came in as senate chair, Larry Vanderhoef at Davis¹⁹⁸ was a couple of years behind when he should have been undergoing a review. The reason was Dynes had been really honest with Larry Pitts that Vanderhoef had planned to resign or to retire, and Dynes said that he had persuaded Larry to stay on, but he still might retire. So Dynes decided not to do the review. That was fine.

The next year, I was chair and Dynes was still not inclined to move it forward. I was not sure what Larry wanted to do. Dynes kept saying that he, Dynes, had persuaded Larry to stay on. But I started getting inquiries from Davis, so I went to Dynes and I said, "Look, it's really put up or shut up time. If Larry's planning to announce his retirement, I have no problems not doing this review. But if Larry's not sure, or if he's going to stay on, then we really ought to just do the review."

Sadly, those discussions took many months. I don't think the review got started until the spring of my year as chair. I sent out letters to all of the faculty at Davis. I appointed a really good committee to review the letters. But we didn't get as much response back as I think was necessary. I felt that we shouldn't ever complete a review of a chancellor unless we had at least a hundred letters from faculty. And we were halfway there. So I decided that what we would do was that I would resolicit those letters in the fall. There was a general agreement that I would continue to run that review even though I was no longer chair of the senate, since I had started it.

So in the fall, I sent out for another round of letters. We got enough letters back that I could charge the review committee with doing the review. I'd also raised with Dynes the possibility of changing the rules about chancellor reviews to get input from more than just the faculty. But Dynes, at the end, said let the review committee make some recommendations about changes. He said he was disinclined to want to change the policy. So the review committee met. I met with them, and they wrote a report, which they sent to me. I sent it to Dynes. The idea was that Dynes should share it with Larry, and there should be some meetings between Larry and Dynes, and Larry and me, to complete the review. So I sent the review to Dynes probably on the order of January. It just sat there, and nothing happened. Months went by. So around March I contacted the president's office and said, "What's happening with the Vanderhoef review?"

They said, "Oh, yeah. We'll get to it."

So I waited and a couple of months later I contacted them again and said, "What's happening with the Vanderhoef review?"

They said, "We'll get to it. We haven't got to it yet. Sorry." I kept contacting them. Nothing happened. Then in July, I was appointed the acting chancellor at Santa Cruz. Right after I was appointed, the president's office contacted me and said, "We just realized that you can't complete the Vanderhoef review." (laughs) A chancellor can't review another chancellor. Of course, I had anticipated that and when I found out I was going to be appointed, I'd contacted Michael Brown because the chair of the senate at the time couldn't do it, John Oakley, because he was from Davis.

Reti: Ah, but Michael could.

Blumenthal: But Michael could. Michael agreed to take on the review, and I kind of passed things along to him. But I just thought it was kind of amusing that it took them

months and months and months, and finally they contacted me only when it was impossible. (Reti laughs) It wasn't that big a deal, actually, but just an interesting footnote of process.

Reti: Well great, George, thank you. We'll stop for today.

The 2005 Long Range Development Plan: Part I

Reti: All right. So today is January 22, 2019. This is Irene Reti. I'm here for the nineteenth session of the oral history that I'm doing with Chancellor Blumenthal. Today we're going to start by talking about the beginnings of the 2005 LRDP process.

Blumenthal: So I think I've already discussed with you when I was senate chair, encouraging M.R.C. to begin an LRDP process and setting up those committees.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: But when I left campus for two years to go up to Oakland, I was completely and utterly disengaged from that process, which I was thankful for. (laughs) When I returned after being chair of the senate, back to campus, I was involved in a bunch of stuff. I was not involved from the get-go in the LRDP. But roughly halfway through the year, I was warned by Meredith Michaels that she was suggesting to Dave Kliger that he include me in the group that was thinking about the LRDP. And the reason was that, to put it bluntly, Chancellor Denice Denton was not involved in the LRDP discussions. All of those discussions were led by Dave. I have no idea whether Denice met with people in the community or not. But every discussion on campus seemed to be led by Dave, who was very much in charge of the LRDP.

But they had gotten to a point where they were now encountering some concerns from the Office of the President. Furthermore, they needed to be coordinating with the Office

of the President as the LRDP was taking shape. So Meredith suggested that I be included in the group.

Now I was not a dummy here. I understood that they weren't asking me for my brains and deep insight into all matters of policy. They were asking me because I knew the people at the Office of the President and therefore, I could be of service in that way. I mean, I knew that. That was fine. I didn't mind being used in that way. But I was a bit frustrated because I was invited to some of the LRDP planning meetings and I was struck by how secretive everything was. Everything was totally secretive. Every discussion was made behind the curtain of attorney/client privilege. I understand some of that. But almost nothing was open. It wasn't even open to the senate people. That troubled me as well. In fact—and I'll come back to the senate a few times on this—but during one of the early meetings, I remember encouraging that they bring the senate in and they didn't want to do that at all, which was extremely frustrating to me because I felt like the senate leadership should be involved in these discussions.

Reti: Why didn't they want to?

Blumenthal: Because it was confidential and they felt that it was an administrative matter that wasn't subject to senate review. I didn't agree with that, but that wasn't my call.

I remember at a certain point we did go to the Office of the President a couple of times to meet with people up there. These were somewhat strange meetings, from my perspective. I mean, imagine—we're having these meetings about a campus's future—the chancellor was not present. It was certainly not my expectation. Dave was actually being the leader of the delegation and I played this kind of weird role as the ambassador because I knew the people and I had personal relationships with them all. So I did a lot, everything I could

to help move this forward. But there was a lot of concern because everyone knew there was community opposition and they wanted to get this absolutely right. But again, the big headline was the absence of the chancellor from these discussions.

Now I wasn't completely surprised by that point. I knew that Denice wasn't heavily involved in a lot of things, but for something that's interfacing with the rest of the system, it was to me quite shocking.

It kind of came to a head in a couple of ways. At one meeting of the senate, probably in, I would guess in January, Dave, in his remarks to the senate, said that he did not plan to bring the LRDP to the regents before September. But then three months later, I'm at one of these planning meetings and I remembered Dave said that he was going to bring it forward in July. July's a little bit fraught, because classes aren't in session, et cetera, et cetera. But it's also earlier than I'd heard him say to the senate. So I called him on it. I said, "You know, you promised the senate that this was not going before July."

And he said, "No, no, I didn't."

I said, "No, no, you did. I was there. Look, Dave, just go get the senate minutes and see what they say." He did. Dave is a completely honest guy, so once he saw what he had said, he backed away from his position. But that didn't mean that there wasn't upset in the senate.

So ultimately I believe that at the main meeting of the Academic Senate that spring, there was a senate resolution proposed calling on the administration not to bring the matter to the regents until the Senate Executive Committee signed off on bringing it to the regents because there had been so little senate consultation and the senate was kind of angry at their non-involvement in the preparation of that plan.

So there was this big senate meeting. (laughs) It was kind of funny because lots of people were there. I came. I decided I wasn't going to say anything. I would just sit there and listen to it all and at a certain point, I was going to vote for the resolution. But I wasn't going to say anything. I think I may have even been sitting with Meredith because at a certain point in the discussion, Tom Vani, who was then the vice chancellor of business affairs and who was in charge of the LRDP, got up and talked about Ranchview Terrace and how screwing around with the senate just slowed down Ranchview Terrace, and that was a big problem and he couldn't afford that here.

Meredith told me later that as soon as she heard that, she knew I would not be able to restrain myself. We talked about that issue earlier.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So I got up, and in response to Tom, I gave a brief outline of why the senate had been involved in holding back final approval of the Ranchview Terrace I. I couldn't resist because to me the moral of the story is: consult with the senate and consult early and often. It seemed to me we were facing the same situation here, so I publicly expressed my support for the resolution.

Reti: Let me just back you up a second.

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: You and I have been here a long time. But for the person who is not necessarily aware—there is academic planning and then there's the long range development plan. How do those two intersect?

Blumenthal: Okay. An academic plan is a plan for how you're going to grow and where you're going to put your resources as you grow, with kind of the assumption that you will

grow. A long range development plan is not a growth plan. It is a land use plan. It is basically a plan for how you will develop the campus *if* you grow. So there's often a growth number associated with the long range development plan, but that's only because you need an enrollment number to figure out how you're going to use your land, to develop the land, in order to accommodate a certain amount of growth. But it is just that, it is a land use plan.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: Sure. And so it actually shouldn't even be called a plan because it isn't a plan. A plan is something you intend to do. What this is, is an outline, or a sketch of what the campus *would* be if it grew by a certain amount.

So the senate resolution passed. I was kind of amazed at the level of paranoia, which sometimes happens with senate faculty, about the vote. Because when they voted, I think they did it in secret ballot at a senate meeting. They had people fill out a ballot and put it in a ballot box, which I don't think we'd ever done before. Clearly, people wanted to do it because they were afraid to have anyone to take notice of their vote. That says something about the environment, about the level of security that people feel about being able to express themselves.: I thought it was kind of offensive to do that because it suggests you don't feel safe. I really didn't believe that the administration here was going to punish people that didn't vote their way. That just didn't seem credible to me.

So anyway, the resolution passed. And maybe we should come back to it later.

Little did I know that two months later I would be the chancellor and I would be in the position of wanting to get this thing to the regents by September. So that was the long range development plan stuff.

In terms of my research at the time—I'm again talking about the year between leaving UCOP and becoming acting chancellor of UCSC, the interregnum year. I did do a little bit of research, but not a lot. I did some stuff on galaxy halos. I was starting to ramp up to do some work on cosmic rays, but never really published anything on cosmic rays. Most of my time during that year was spent on the textbook, to the extent that I did anything creative. We did a second edition of the book. I'll come back to that later, but that took a lot of my time that year, for reasons that I'll explain.

Chancellor Denice Denton

And then there was Denice Denton. So let me say a little bit about Denice. I first met Denice when I was systemwide senate chair and when she was appointed chancellor. She was appointed chancellor several months before my term as senate chair ended. I remember meeting her. In fact, one day Bob Dynes popped over to my office and said, "Would you like to meet your new chancellor?" I said, sure. So he took me down to another office, and there was Denice. I chatted with her for a few minutes. I remember thinking she was a little unusual. She wasn't very emotive in the way she spoke. It's hard for me to describe that. She felt kind of monotonal in her speaking. But you know, everyone's different and I didn't make too much of it.

Anyway, I offered and she accepted, to have dinner with her a couple of times before Council of Chancellors meetings. So the Tuesday night before Council of Chancellors meetings, I met her a couple of times for dinner. The first time was very substantive. I spent the entire dinner briefing her on all of the issues facing UC. She showed me her agenda. I was kind of shocked at how sparse the agenda for the Council of Chancellors was. But I knew the stuff on there cold and I literally spent the whole dinner briefing her, which I *hope* she appreciated.

The next month when she came up, I thought we were going to have another dinner to brief her on the issues before that meeting. But in fact she arranged for Winston Doby to join us. Winston Doby¹⁹⁹ was then the vice president of student affairs. I like Winston a lot. I occasionally had dinner with him myself. But the three of us went to dinner that night, so I didn't really get a chance to brief her. I think Winston and she dominated that conversation. Winston took us to a soul restaurant in Oakland. A lot of the discussion was around topics like music. The two of them shared an interest in kinds of music that weren't of particular interest to me. So I felt a little bit out of it in that conversation. No negative feelings, but—

Then I also met Gretchen Kalonji, Denice's partner. They were talking to her about coming to UCOP, which she did do, to take a position to encourage international cooperation among the UC campuses with various programs abroad. So when Gretchen came to visit, I went to lunch with her. We had a very, very nice lunch. I liked Gretchen a lot. I thought she was interesting, well-traveled. I think she spoke Chinese, so we went to a Chinese dim sum restaurant and she ordered in Chinese. I found her very, very interesting. Unusual, but interesting. I liked Gretchen a lot.

Then the next thing was kind of weird. I think they were trying to get Gretchen a position in the engineering school at Santa Cruz.

Reti: In addition to her job at UCOP?

Blumenthal: Well, I think as an academic, she needed a campus appointment. I wasn't real current with what was going on at Santa Cruz, but one day, I was in Los Angeles and I was at a meeting of one of the intersegmental groups that I was a part of. It was one of these meetings in a hotel near the airport at LAX. And all of a sudden, I get a call from Denice. This was before she showed up to be chancellor. Denice said basically that she

feared that Gretchen wasn't being adequately welcomed at Santa Cruz. She asked me if I would call Gretchen to basically say to her, "Oh, yes, people at Santa Cruz are really going to welcome you, and we're really glad that you're coming."

I inferred from that that there were some issues, that either Gretchen didn't want to come to Santa Cruz, or she didn't feel welcome, or Denice was feeling Gretchen wasn't getting enough of a welcome at Santa Cruz. It wasn't quite clear to me what the story behind the story was. But Denice was pretty clear with me that this was important to her. She was asking me to do this. She said, "I don't know if I can come to Santa Cruz without Gretchen." The implication was that Gretchen might not come for one reason or another.

I felt really awkward. This was a difficult call to make. But I called Gretchen. It turned out not to be a big deal. We had a pleasant conversation. I made whatever points I made. She seemed to have expected it. The call, in actuality, wasn't anywhere near as awkward as my thinking about the call. But I did it while I was at this meeting in Los Angeles. I went back into the meeting. I did it right after Denice had called. Sometimes I put stuff off forever, but this was going to be unpleasant enough to contemplate, I thought I would just do it and get it over with. But it wasn't unpleasant at all. Gretchen was very nice and very understanding.

So I go back to my meeting and about two hours later I get a call from Alison Galloway, who was then the chair of the senate at Santa Cruz. Alison said that she had gotten a call from Denice asking *her* to call Gretchen and tell her how welcome she was going to be at Santa Cruz. I think Alison felt much more awkward about this, because Alison had never met Gretchen, had no idea of anything about her. Alison was seeking my advice about what she should do, because she just didn't feel comfortable doing this at all, which you

can imagine. I mean, I was uncomfortable doing this, and I knew Gretchen and liked Gretchen. But Alison didn't even know her.

So Alison and I talked about it for a while. I advised her to make the call. I said, "Look, you know, I did this. Gretchen was understanding. I don't think it's that big a deal. I don't think you should have been placed in this situation. But given where you are, for you to not do it would conceivably hurt your relationship with Denice, and so you may as well just do it." So she did and she later told me that it just wasn't a big deal.

Then my term ended and I came to Santa Cruz. Soon after I came to Santa Cruz, I got a notice that the chancellor wanted me to come over and meet with her at lunch. So I came over. Apparently Dave was supposed to be there, but couldn't be there. I think it might have gone a lot better if Dave had been there. But basically at lunch Denice offered me a position as kind of a special faculty assistant to the chancellor, which isn't an unusual thing to happen. I think that happened to Michael Cowan after he was chair of the senate. I think it has happened to other chairs. So it wasn't completely unexpected by me. I even suspected that the president had put her up to it, but I wasn't sure. I later asked him and he said no, he hadn't done it.

But it was a weird lunch because I basically said to her, "Okay, so what do you want me to do?" She said she had two projects that she was thinking about. One had to do with being a coordinator of diversity efforts and the other was to rewrite all of the bylaws of the Academic Senate to make it more efficient.

So I need to be frank here. Even walking in there, I was skeptical. I mean, I don't know whether I said this or not, but I'll say it out loud. When Denice was appointed chancellor, I knew already that there were some members of the senate leadership and of the search

committee who were not happy. But I didn't know any details, and it seemed to me what you do is you welcome a new chancellor.

One of the people, however, who was very unhappy was Kelly, my wife. The reason she was unhappy was because she read an interview with Denice in the *San Jose Mercury*. And in the *Mercury* article Denice said basically that when she was appointed dean of engineering in Washington, the first thing she did was she got rid of—I forget the exact numbers—nine out of thirteen department chairs. That was the first thing she did when she became dean. I just made up the numbers. I don't remember what they were, but it was something like that. Kelly's reaction was, anyone who would brag about that as being one of the things she did in her job is not somebody who's going to be a good chancellor. So Kelly was skeptical about Denice from day one. I will add that Kelly never met Denice, ever. The two of them never crossed paths. But I knew how Kelly felt about Denice from the beginning.

So when I had this meeting with Denice, there were two questions in my mind. One is, if I do this, what am I going to be doing? And two, how am I going to explain this to my wife? (laughter) I was prepared to do that if I needed to. But I really was looking for something compelling and I felt that the two ideas that she put on the table were not compelling. I thought diversity was very important. I think it's something that the university should be pursuing much more than we were. I just didn't feel that I was the right choice to be the person to lead that. Not that it wasn't a worthwhile thing; I just felt like I wasn't the right person to do it and I didn't want to be set up for failure.

In terms of the senate bylaws and reforming the senate, it would have been completely inappropriate for that to be an initiative coming out of the chancellor's office, in so many ways. For me, that was just like a nonstarter from day one. So basically she presented me

with two alternatives, neither of which I thought were reasonable. I told her I'd think about it, but I told her I didn't think I was inclined to do it. That's kind of how we left it. It was awkward.

I remember afterwards I talked to Michael Brown. I don't know if I'd mentioned this already, but Michael's been kind of a confidante of mine for years, ever since we started working together when he was chair of BOARS and I was chair of the senate. So I talked frequently to Michael and used him as a sounding board. I remember I talked to him several times about this. He kept encouraging me to do this, and I kept saying, "I don't see how I can."

But anyway, she did make that offer. But I pretty much decided that I was better off not doing that and not being associated with the administration, although I did later do this thing on the LRDP. So I pretty much stayed away from Denice, or had little to do with Denice. In fact, during that year I was never once at University House. Not once.

So the Academic Senate, the local Committee on Committees, had decided to appoint me to be the assembly representative that year. I think I already mentioned that. The reason they wanted me to be the assembly representative was because first of all, I knew the assembly well from my previous experience. Secondly, they wanted my experience on the Senate Executive Committee and that was a way to do it. I didn't have a portfolio, but I was a member of the SEC. So I did consistently go to SEC member meetings and tried to participate and lend whatever experience I had. I think I was an active and useful member of the group. But I didn't really have much to do with Denice during most of that year.

I remember—(laughs) I don't know, this was so weird. They did have a cabinet Senate Executive Committee meeting, or whatever it was called in those days, that I went to. They used to have these meetings at eight o'clock in the morning. I'm not real good at getting

here at eight in the morning, so I remember stumbling into this meeting at like 8:15 and being shocked because everyone was there. (laughter) I was by far the last person to show up. I looked around the room and the table was almost full. There was only one empty seat. It was next to Denice. Then I looked to see whether there were chairs around the back of the room. There was only one chair left in the back of the room. So I had to make a decision. I went and of course sat down next to Denice. But I remember thinking that it was so weird in such a crowded room that no one wanted to sit next to the chancellor. I didn't know what that meant. I was hearing hints, but I wasn't paying much attention to them, that there were problems. I think I'd heard about the weird trip up into the Sierras where Denice had suddenly found herself driving in the Sierras and had no idea how she had gotten there. And I knew that she had missed some senate meetings. I didn't know she was sick. People tended to interpret it as lack of interest rather than illness, but in fact it was probably illness.

I didn't pay much attention to any of this until there was a meeting in Los Angeles. I went to Los Angeles for a meeting of the Long-Range Guidance Team, which was a group of regents and others who were put together to think about the future of the university. I was a member of that group. They held one of the meetings at a regents meeting because the regents were at least there. So I flew down to LA to attend that meeting. It turns out they were also having one of their large regents dinners during that meeting. So I was invited to that as well. They were getting sticky about inviting people to regents dinners, but since I was in some sense a former regent, I think they automatically invited me.

So I went down there for the meeting. Larry Pitts was there as well. I'm not sure I remember why Larry was there, but he was there for some reason. I don't know if he was on the Long-Range Guidance Team, or exactly what it was. But I do remember that he made the decision to come at the last minute. He had trouble getting a hotel room, so I

offered to share my hotel room with him. I had a hotel room with two beds, and I said “You can share my room.”

So I was down there. I was having dinner. I was sitting, I think, between one of the regents and I think the director of Los Alamos National Labs. I was very heavily engaged in dinner conversation, when all of a sudden Denice came over to me and said, “I have to talk to you urgently.” So, of course, I got up from dinner. It was a huge room, and we went off to the side of the room and had a conversation, which was a really weird conversation. It was 98 percent her talking. Now, I don’t know that she actually poked me in the chest during the conversation; I don’t remember that well enough. What I do remember is that she kept getting inside of my space, if you know what I mean. There’s a certain space that you just wouldn’t—

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: She was certainly inside my space and it felt like she was poking me in the chest—I mean, felt in an emotional sense. I don’t remember whether she was actually poking me. It wouldn’t have bothered me any more to be poked than to have her inside my space. She wanted to talk to me about the students at Santa Cruz and how the students were becoming unmanageable. She said there were ninjas that had gone to one of the colleges and broken the locks on the dormitories and done innumerable damage. By ninjas, I gather she meant students wearing masks.

Then, of course, she’d had the incident at her house where somebody had thrown some kind of barrier through one of the bedroom windows at her house. She said the students had become completely unmanageable. She wanted to talk to me because it was the responsibility of the faculty to keep the students in order. She said that we needed to step up as faculty.

Well, of course, I wasn't the faculty leader anymore. I was not necessarily the person to be talking to, but I was very convenient because I may have been the only Santa Cruz faculty member in the area. This went on for like a half an hour. It went on interminably. The only thing I think I said at one point was, "Well, you know, the campus is remarkably safe as campuses go. We have the lowest crime rate against people of any of the UC campuses."

She said, "That's irrelevant." I remember her saying that. She just went on. She kept talking and talking and talking. It was a rant, basically. The overarching theme was the students are out of control and the faculty are going to have to step up in the situation. It was really, really strange. I remember (laughs) I kept looking over at my table, trying to figure out how I could get back.

Reti: Help, somebody save me! (laughter)

Blumenthal: Finally, I remember she said, "Okay, I'll let you go now." I happily went back to my table and resumed my, by this time, very cold dinner. I was really shaken by this experience. That night because Larry and I were sharing a room, I really let Larry hear an earful from me about what was going on and how crazy this was. I think Larry had been on the search committee for Denice. I wasn't trying to get information, but I was just venting about how bad it was and he was a convenient person—(laughs) Larry left at like five in the morning so that he could catch an early flight. That's very Larry-like.

So the next morning I go to the regents meeting. I believe that was the regents meeting where Michael Brown was seated as vice chair of the senate. Cliff Brunk had been ousted as chair of the senate. Therefore his vice chair, John Oakley, had become chair of the senate roughly six months early. Since Michael had just been elected vice chair, the decision was made to seat him as the faculty representative to the regents six months

early. Since I had to be there in the afternoon for the Long-Range Guidance Team and I wasn't doing anything in the morning, I figured, what the hell, I'll go to the regents meeting and I'll watch Michael being officially seated. Since Michael was already a good friend, I was really pleased about that.

So I walked into the regents meeting in the morning. Regents audiences are divided into two parts: there's the part that's university officials and there's a part that's the general public. You have to be on their official list to be in the university officials part. But I was really good at talking my way in. Even before I was faculty representative to the regents, I remember one day I showed up at a regents meeting wearing a jacket and tie, and they let me in because I just looked like I belonged. (Reti laughs)

Anyway, somehow I talked my way into the meeting. I'm sure I wasn't on their list. I walked in. They were just getting ready to seat Michael, so my timing was perfect. I walked in and I sat down next to Dilling Yang, Henry Yang's wife,²⁰⁰ who was in the audience. And so I said hello to Dilling. Then they took like one minute to officially welcome Michael.

I'm sitting there next to Dilling, and I'm literally saying to her, "How are you doing, Dilling?" All of a sudden, I feel this arm on my shoulder, or a hand on my shoulder, and it was George Marcus, one of the regents. He had seen me come in. He had no idea I would be at the meeting. He had seen me come in. He'd gotten up, walked out of the back of the room, walked all the way around the back of the audience, and come in to get me. He said, "I've got to talk to you right now." I said, sure. So we walked out into the hall. He said, "What's the story with your chancellor?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, “Well, what do the faculty think of the chancellor? What do you think of the chancellor?”

I tried to be honest with him. I said that I felt like she’d been a little bit absent throughout the year and that I had just had this incident with her the previous day which had really shaken me because I felt it was an irrational conversation.

He said, “Okay, she approached me and I had a conversation with her as well.” And then he said, “So, does Bob know?” He meant Bob Dynes.

I said, “I have no idea. I have not discussed this with Bob.”

He said, “Don’t you think Bob Dynes should know what’s going on?”

I said, “Yes—” somewhat fearfully. (laughter)

Then he kind of let me go and I went back to the meeting. When they broke for lunch, as we were getting ready to go to lunch, George kind of sidled over to me and said, “Bob knows,” which I interpreted to mean that he had sought out Dynes and had a conversation with him about what was going on.

I knew something bad was happening. I wasn’t sure exactly what it was, but I was sure that I was not having rational conversations with her. So I was really shaken by this experience. It was far worse than anything I could have imagined.

So, after our meeting that afternoon, the next day I came back to Santa Cruz. I remember I was driving into campus and I decided, I can’t let this go. So I made two phone calls, one to Alison Galloway, who was by then vice provost of academic affairs, and the other to Meredith Michaels, who was the vice chancellor of planning and budget. These were my

two best friends among the senior central administration. So I arranged to have lunch with Meredith one day and then Alison the next day.

I had lunch with Meredith. Meredith thanked me for inviting her to lunch. She said she was in a long meeting with the chancellor and others, and she was so happy to be able to say she had a lunch appointment she had to leave for. It was clear from talking to Meredith that things were bad. It was also clear that Meredith was avoiding meeting with Denice. The way it works with chancellors is often the vice chancellor of planning and budget (or any vice chancellor) will try to have more, rather than fewer, meetings with the chancellor, just because there's so much to convey, so much to talk about, and the vice chancellor of planning and budget is so central. But in fact, it was clear to me that Meredith was trying to avoid having meetings with the chancellor, which didn't strike me as a particularly healthy situation.

The next day I met with Alison. Alison's first comment to me when I called her up was, "We have to have lunch off campus." At one level, that wasn't such a big deal, because when Alison was vice chair and I was chair of the senate, we often went to lunch, and we usually went to lunch off campus. We usually went to the Greek place down on Mission Street to have lunch. So that wasn't an unusual thing for us to do, but we hadn't done that for a couple of years. I certainly interpreted her desire to have lunch off campus as a desire not to be discussing this topic on the campus because she knew why I was calling. I think that was true. I think she may have indicated this to me. But at the time, the vice provosts were all meeting together as a group off campus to share their experiences and share some of their concerns. But they made a point of doing it off campus.

So it was clear to me at that point that something was really wrong, since I was hearing that from both Alison and Meredith. But what was I to do? I was a faculty member. And I

was not particularly inclined to do anything activist. I'd been activist about this whole Cliff Brunk thing. I was tired of being the person tearing others down. I just felt that I didn't have a role here, although I was deeply disturbed by what I was hearing.

And I'll come back to this later, but I did find out later that as Denice tried to pull people into her own form of paranoia; she had people staying over at University House because she was afraid to be there alone. Gretchen never spent the night at University House. Denice was afraid. So she invited several members of the administration to spend extended periods with her at University House. I think both Meredith and Alison managed to stay out of it. They wouldn't go there, which was appropriate. I think they had an excuse because both of them were single mothers. There was a good reason to do that, but I think they didn't want to get involved in the craziness.

Anyway, another event happened around this time. I think, this was the inauguration of Denice, which I think happened before this infamous meeting.

I remember well the inauguration of Denice. The day of Denice's inauguration, I had lunch with Meredith Michaels, just by random chance. I remember asking her to tell me a little bit about the inauguration and what was going on. So she told me a little bit about the planning. I remember I said, "So, how many regents are coming?" And she said, "Only one regent, George Marcus," who was the most local regent. That surprised me, because usually most of the regents usually showed up at investitures. I remember asking her how many chancellors were coming. I think she said only one chancellor, France Cordova, was going to come. That also surprised me since usually seven to eight other chancellors attend these. But the president would be there for sure.

So we had a leisurely lunch. We decided to walk over to the inauguration together. I think it was at the Music Recital Hall. So we walked over to the inauguration. The first thing I

noticed was, there's a pile of chancellors there. I saw Bob Dynes, and I said hello to Dynes. I looked at all these chancellors. And I said, "Meredith, so you're really in the know, aren't you?" (laughter) She was quite puzzled.

So we had the inauguration, which I thought was interesting, although a bit strange. Interesting in the sense that Denice was one of those people who, when she spoke to an audience, she liked to do audience participation. She'd ask questions of the audience. It is a real skill. It's something I don't do very well. I think she did it much better than I could do it. That was really very much her style. For the inauguration, it was a refreshing kind of approach.

She also started with her theme. She had one theme which I didn't particularly like—namely excellence through diversity. I believe in excellence and I believe in diversity. But I don't necessarily think it's a causal relationship, in the sense that you have to do one before you do the other. It seems to me that it's excellence *and* diversity that you want. They feed into each other. You can't be truly excellent unless you're diverse. But I don't see diversity as a train station you have to pass before you get to the next station called excellence. I never saw the connection quite the same way that she did. But fine. She was chancellor; I wasn't.

So we had this event. Then it ended and there was this big reception and there were all these chancellors at the reception. I was blown away by how many of the chancellors were there. I stayed at the reception for a couple of hours, probably, and then decided to go back to my office.

I walked back to my office. In those days I had an old flip cellphone. So I flipped open my cellphone, which I had muted. I looked at it and it said something like, "You have eighty-seven messages." (laughter) And it turns out, that was the day that M.R.C. Greenwood

resigned as provost. It was the same day as Denice's inauguration. Dynes had called a meeting of the chancellors at Santa Cruz that day to talk about the provost's resignation, which is why all the chancellors showed up at the last minute. The eighty-seven messages were all from people I knew asking me what I knew about M.R.C.'s resignation, which, of course, I knew nothing about.

Reti: Because you had long been gone from the Office of the President.

Blumenthal: I'd long been gone. I didn't really know about the scandal, the supposed scandal, that led to it. I later found out more about it. M.R.C. was accused of two things. One was she had hired Lynda Goff. It turned out she and Lynda owned some property together, which was not yet sold at the time that M.R.C. hired Lynda.²⁰¹ And so, it was technically a conflict of interest. M.R.C.'s defense, which actually I believe, was that she thought the property had already been sold and didn't realize that it was still pending. Frankly, I thought her explanation was quite plausible. But it was a technical violation. That was one issue.

The other issue was that Winston Doby, who I mentioned a few minutes ago, who worked for M.R.C., had arranged for M.R.C.'s son to get a job at Merced in fundraising. And there was concern that M.R.C. had used her influence with Winston in order to persuade Winston to use his influence to get her son that job.

So those were the two accusations against M.R.C. M.R.C, of course, when she heard about that denied them both, and when Dynes suggested that she needed to go on leave while they were investigated, she refused and resigned instead. That's how she left the position as provost. It was unfortunate that she resigned because I think she could have been largely exonerated. But she made that decision and was very bitter; she's been bitter ever since towards Dynes.

And Winston Doby—his situation was even more weird. There was an investigation and they found no wrongdoing by Winston but then they tried to sanction him as a result of the report that showed no wrongdoing. I just plain didn't understand that. I think he was poorly treated in the end as well. I never really understood how they could possibly say what they said to Winston.

Anyway, none of this was my business, so I stayed out of it. I did talk to Winston a couple of times because I was just concerned about him. But that's how it all came out. I think M.R.C. has not, and will never forgive, Bob Dynes. I think Bob's position was that given the nature of these allegations, he had to take the action that he did.

Anyway, that was the inauguration, which turned out to be much more of an event than I had ever imagined. In fact, it was funny because later I got a call or a note from Michael Drake at Irvine apologizing to me, because he and I had talked for a while at the inauguration and he said nothing. He just wanted me to know that they were under strict orders to say nothing, which I certainly can understand.

Okay, so we're talking about Denice. As the year drew to a close, graduation was upon us. That year the graduate degree speaker was Steve Hawley, the astronaut.²⁰² Steve got his PhD at UCSC, and he was a former student of mine. I was pretty close to Steve while he was here. So a few weeks before graduation, I got a note inviting me to a dinner with Steve at the chancellor's house, University House, which I accepted and RSVP'd for. Then like the day before this event, this dinner, I got a note saying the dinner had been moved from University House to the University Center. I didn't give it a whole lot of thought. Well, it turns out, unbeknownst to me, this was the period when Denice had checked herself into a mental hospital, and therefore she couldn't participate in the event. Dave [Kliger] was going to be in charge.

So I showed up for this dinner. I got there early and Dave was the only other person there. Dave took me aside and started discussing the obligations of the EVC to inform the president about the chancellor when there were issues with the chancellor's performance and stability. Dave told me that he had consulted privately with campus counsel about what he could or couldn't pass along to Dynes and that campus counsel had advised him that there were privacy concerns and that he couldn't violate those privacy concerns.

I remember what my reaction was: bullshit. It seemed to me that the president had a right to know what was going on with one of his chancellors, that it was really important that such information be conveyed to him. If her behavior—even if she was ill—if that behavior impeded her ability to be chancellor, the president had every right to know about it.

Reti: So was this before or after the dinner that you were at?

Blumenthal: Oh, way after.

Reti: Okay, so you knew that Dynes already had some idea.

Blumenthal: He knew something was very wrong.

Reti: Yeah. But you also knew that Dynes had been told—

Blumenthal: Yeah. I knew Dynes knew about it. But it wasn't clear if Dynes knew about either the magnitude or the duration of the problem.

Reti: You didn't know to what extent.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I think from Dave's perspective, I think it might have been a very different story than—

Reti: Yeah. Well, a number of months had passed.

Blumenthal: Yes. So anyway, we were having this conversation, and I was really not accepting the notion that the legal advice he had gotten was correct. You have to understand I'm married to a lawyer. I know that you should just disregard legal opinions half the time. (laughs) If I were afraid of arguing with lawyers, I wouldn't have had a very successful marriage.

But Dave, I think, was trying very legitimately to make sure he understood the legal issues he was facing as he tried to ethically address this challenging issue. Anyway, I was very dismissive of the argument that he was barred from discussing her situation with the president. At that point, the other guests arrived, so Dave said he wanted to continue the conversation. But I told him that I was leaving the next morning, early in the morning, to take my daughter back east for a week to look at colleges. You know, in marriages, everybody has their own responsibility. My job with our kids was to take both of them on the big college tours, partly because Kelly hates renting cars and driving around, and partly because I really enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time with my kids. Anyway, I told him I was going to be gone for a week, but I'd call his office and make an appointment to see him as soon as I got back. He said, "Please do." So I made the appointment and then took off with Sarah for the East Coast.

We were in New York to visit Columbia a few days later. I think we were at the Hilton in New York. Avenue of the Stars. I got a call from Maria Bertero-Barceló telling me that Denice had killed herself. And immediately thereafter I got a call from Dave telling me the same thing. I was, of course, shocked that this could happen, that anyone would do this. So we talked about it for a few minutes. We were clearly not going to talk long. Then he said, "Well, I've recommended to Bruce Darling that you be appointed the acting chancellor."

I said to him, “Dave, wait a minute. Why not you?” And he said, because he’s working on the academic planning process and he wants to complete that. It was a relatively short conversation but you can imagine how I felt when we got off the phone. This was completely out of left field.

Reti: So you had not ever had any aspirations—

Blumenthal: I wouldn’t say that. The truth is during that year I was thinking of positions I might want. So I was prepared for a position. In fact, I’d even had a conversation with Alberto Pimental about a position they were creating at UCOP. The new provost, Rory Hume, who replaced M.R.C. Greenwood, had decided to create a new vice provost position of academic affairs to do planning and to do things like that. Alberto talked to me about whether I might be interested in that, and I was actually very interested in that. But it was just in the talking stage at that point.

I’d never imagined chancellor at Santa Cruz. That was just so far removed from likelihood. And just because Dave recommended it, I wasn’t even sure I would be the only person he recommended. It didn’t mean it was going to happen.

Reti: Did you have any thoughts like: I would never want to do that? Or you were open to the possibility?

Blumenthal: Oh, no, no. I was pretty clear in my own mind that if this were to happen, I’d be interested. But it seemed pretty far-fetched.

I finished my trip with Sarah. We went to the remaining places on our trip. I did cancel my meeting with Dave because there was no need for the discussion we planned to have. Frankly, in thinking about it, I was pretty sure Dave was going to ask me to go talk to Dynes, and I didn’t want to do it. But I was undecided whether I would do it, because I

recognized that it needed to happen. On the other hand, I really didn't want to be the guy who keeps going to Dynes and telling him what's wrong with all the people whom he has to deal with, you know what I mean? (laughs) I felt really uncomfortable doing this a second time.

So anyway, we got back. They'd arranged a memorial service for Denice. I remember going over to the memorial service. I got there a little bit early, but there was a long line. The memorial service was at the Music Recital Hall. I was shocked when I got there. The line extended forever. There was clearly no opportunity to get in. What should I do? As I was thinking about it, I saw Mary-Beth Harhen near the front of the line. So I went over and started chatting with her. I think she invited me to join her. I remember I said to the people in the line around me, I said, "Would you mind?" None of them minded. So I was standing there talking with Mary-Beth when the official parties started to arrive. Somebody came over to me and said, "Oh, Professor Blumenthal, you need to be in the VIP section." So I said goodbye to Mary-Beth. (laughter) and rather sheepishly went over to the VIP section.

They showed me in and I went in. I sat down next to Michael Bishop, who was then the chancellor at San Francisco. Michael and I always had interesting chats. In fact, I remember one inauguration where I was sitting in the back of the stage and Michael was supposed to sit in the front of the stage. But he sat in the back next to me. And they kept trying to get him to go to the front. He said, "No, I want to finish my conversation with George." (laughter)

Anyway, I sat next to Michael. We're sitting there chatting. And these four women walk in. I didn't recognize any of them. Everyone else in the VIP section, I knew, either from campus or from systemwide. But I didn't recognize any of these four women. They came

and they sat down next to me. So I turned to the woman next to me and I introduced myself and she introduced herself. It turns out her name was Linda Katehi,²⁰³ and she had been the dean of engineering, at the University of Illinois. Of course, two or three years later, she became the chancellor at Davis. She introduced the three other women, and they were all deans of engineering. They all felt that they had been mentored by Denice. They had come out to show their respect, which I thought was extremely impressive. I was very impressed by that. Denice must have done some really amazing work to induce them to come out and show their respect in that way.

The service itself was interesting. I heard that there had been a big fight between the family of Denice and Gretchen over whether or not Gretchen would be allowed to speak. So that drama kind of played out. That was all very sad. I think Denice's sister spoke. And they had a very large picture of Denice, I guess the picture they have hanging in University Center.

Then when the memorial service ended, they had a lunch for the VIPs. So I went into lunch. That was also a very interesting experience in a number of ways. The first thing that happened as I was walking into lunch was one of our foundation board members, Garry Spire, took me aside. He started ranting about Denice, and how terrible Denice was for the foundation board and how they could never raise money with somebody like Denice there. I heard him out, and it was all very interesting, but I wasn't sure at all why Garry had unloaded this on me. But I heard him out.

Recruited as Acting Chancellor

And then John Oakley, who was the chair of the senate then, took me aside and said, "George, I need to talk to you right now." I said, sure. So we went outside and we took a walk in the woods before the lunch was served. I had this kind of surreal conversation

with John. It felt like a job interview. John was asking me questions like, “What experience do you have raising money? Dealing with donors? What kind of experience do you have with political leaders, politicians? Do you think you could do the job as chancellor?” He was really pushing me on all of these questions about my qualifications to be the acting chancellor. I was kind of puzzled by that, because that isn’t John’s role. And John knew me pretty well. John’s one of those—he’s a law professor, prototypical law professor. When he speaks, he’s like talking from temple mount. (Reti laughs) So it was a very interesting experience. But anyway, we talked about it for a while. I remember telling him I’d raised a little bit of money but not much, but I thought I could talk to donors. I’d interacted with a lot of political leaders over the years, and I knew the campus well. But I wasn’t really trying to sell myself. I was just trying to respond to his questions. So anyway, we had that talk. I later learned that the reason he did this was because he had driven down and was intending to drive back with Bob Dynes. So he wanted to pass along his opinions and wisdom to Dynes.

Then the other thing I remember is Rory Hume, the new provost, took me aside. I’d gotten to know Rory a little bit.²⁰⁴ Rory basically said, “You know, the word is out there that you may have a real chance to be the acting chancellor.” And I said, “Yeah, really?” He said, “Yeah, but the one thing I have to warn you is don’t assume that that means you’ll be chancellor. There’s no presumption there. I could easily see you becoming acting chancellor. I’m not so sure I could see you being chancellor.” I thanked him for his frank assessment.

So this kind of sat for a while. I don’t think Dynes acted particularly quickly afterwards, partly out of respect for Denise. But a week or two later, I got a call from Dynes. And it’s always very intimidating. I would get this email first thing in the morning saying, “The president wants to speak with you at 11:30.” (laughter) I got a call from Dynes and he

wanted to talk about the acting chancellor position. It was a very long conversation. The first question he asked me was who did I think could be a reasonable choice for acting chancellor. I said I had thought about the question a lot and I thought that there were two strong and good candidates. He said, "Who are they?"

I said the two people are "Marty Chemers and me." I said, "Marty would be just fine. He would be well-received on the campus. I could very much support Marty as acting chancellor again." But I said, "I think I would also be supported in terms of doing the job."

Then he said, "Well, what about some other people?" And then he gave me a few names. I remember he mentioned Carol Tomlinson-Keasey, who had stepped down as chancellor at Merced. I like Carol in her own way. I think she did some amazing things at Merced. But I thought she would be a complete cultural mismatch for Santa Cruz, particularly at that moment in time.

We talked for a while about names. Then he started talking about me. He never asked me any of the questions that John had asked. He never asked me whether I was qualified to do this. He knew me pretty well by that time, but still, he didn't know much about my background. But he really wanted to talk about the fact that an appointment as acting chancellor was not a guarantee of appointment as chancellor. It was a really weird conversation, because he didn't just say that. He said it over and over and over again, and beat home the point. I tried to say to him, "Look, I get it." I reminded him that I was on the chancellor search committee for the San Diego replacement for him, and the acting chancellor didn't get it and didn't come close to getting it. I was on the search for the Irvine chancellor, where the person who's the logical acting chancellor choice didn't get the appointment. Marty Chemers had been acting chancellor at UCSC, and everybody knew he was a candidate, but he didn't get it. I said, "I wasn't born yesterday. I get it.

Being acting chancellor is not in any way a guarantee, or even necessarily a strong indication that you become the permanent chancellor.” So I kept saying to him, “Bob, I get it.” And he kept repeating this over and over again.

Finally, I got annoyed. I said to him, “Look, Bob, we need to be really clear. If you’re saying to me, ‘George, I believe that there is something about you which would permanently disqualify you as chancellor—for example, if you wanted to say, ‘I believe nobody over the height of six foot two should ever be a chancellor,’ if that’s what you think, then tell me! Just say it, and I can live with that. I might still be willing to be acting chancellor under those circumstances. But I’d rather have it be upfront and just know what you’re thinking, rather than just hearing these vague statements over and over again.”

He said, “No, no, no, no, no. That’s not what I’m saying at all.” He said, “I’m just saying what I’m saying, which is there’s no presumption there.”

I said, “Bob, I get it.” So he finally stopped saying that.

Then that was the end of the call. He said, “I’ll think about it some more and I’ll let you know in a few weeks.”

Reti: I can think of a number of reasons why you would have been a fantastic candidate as acting chancellor. Certainly your work as chair of the Academic Senate both here at UCSC and systemwide, and all the other things you have done in administration. And your long-time familiarity with the campus.

Blumenthal: Mm hmm.

Reti: Were those the kinds of things that were going into the equation?

Blumenthal: I think that for Bob it was knowing me, the fact that he knew me for two years, we'd gotten along well. Frankly, I think the fact that I'm a physicist and he's a physicist let us talk to each other easily. I told you the story of translating some of these statistical arguments in the language he could understand. I think it was reasons like that. And I think he felt that I'd been a good and responsible chair of the senate. He'd seen me in action. My guess is that those were the primary factors.

Reti: Okay. And for Dave Kliger as well?

Blumenthal: Well Dave had a more interesting question. I've never actually asked him that question directly. In fact, I was surprised by that because I'd been a chair when he was dean, but I don't think he would have called me one of his best chairs. I wasn't the most responsible administrator in the world and we'd had a big fight over the space in Kerr Hall, for example.

On the other hand, I think he did know that I was principled, and that I wasn't afraid to raise issues of principle in terms of discussion. I think he knew that I was reasonably well respected by people on campus. And I think he knew that I held those positions in the senate that lent a certain credibility to me as well. I'm sure those were some of the factors that were in Dave's mind. I think for Dave it was a non-starter to do this.

I suspect that Dave had been pretty beaten down by then. He'd been the dean for fifteen years of the Division of Physical and Biological Sciences. And now he'd been the EVC for a year, or a year plus, and basically doing the work of the chancellor, in addition. Furthermore, he'd had to kind of mitigate some of the stuff that Denise was doing with regard to the people hired and fired. I'll come back to that in a little while. So he had a lot of pressure on him. I think that would have really dragged him down if he wanted to be acting chancellor. Certainly, he could have done it. You couldn't find a more experienced,

capable administrator than Dave Kliger, and a more fair and decent guy as well. But I think that for him contemplating that burden was just really difficult. And I think he felt very emotional about it.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So somehow after that call, I think I did have a conversation with Dave. He had asked me to let him know what I heard. So I told him about the call. I told him I didn't know what was going to happen but I said I would keep him informed.

Nothing happened for a couple of weeks, until one morning I got an email saying (or maybe it was a call this time) at eight in the morning, which is not my best time, saying, "The president wants to talk to you at 11:30."

It turned out that was a busy day for me because I was giving the departmental exam to graduate students, which they take at the end of their second year. I'd put together the exam and I was administrating it that day. But 11:30 was a good time because it was between the morning and the afternoon session. So I had a little bit of time. But I also had a faculty meeting in the department later in the afternoon and it was really awkward because I had promised Sandy Faber I would come. She was then the chair of astronomy. The issue concerned the faculty appointment of the proposed vice chancellor of research, who was Bruce Margon. Margon was an astronomer. They were recruiting him to vice chancellor of research from Washington.²⁰⁵ Within the department, that was not an easy thing. There were those in the department who, for a variety of reasons, were adamantly opposed to adding him to the faculty. They were certainly opposed to his appointment as vice chancellor, but they really wanted nothing to do with him in the department.

And there were others who said, well, you know, don't look a gift horse in the mouth. Or don't hold old grudges from twenty years ago or whatever. There were both. So Sandy had

prevailed upon me, saying I needed to come because I had talked to people on both sides of the issue. I didn't know Bruce that well. I knew him. I'd known Bruce since he was a graduate student and I thought he was really smart. But I also recognized some of the controversies that had happened. So I'd promised Sandy to do this.

So anyway, 11:30 comes. I have my conversation with Dynes and he basically offered me the job as acting chancellor. I accept. He tells me what the salary is. It wasn't that much, but you know, I wasn't looking gift horses in the mouth. I was excited. I was kind of surprised, but definitely excited. But again, it was a fairly short phone call. He told me the appointment would take place officially within a week or two and it would be confirmed by the regents in July. So I thanked him.

I had to get through the rest of the day. The first thing I decided to do was I sent—I didn't have the courage to call her—I sent an email to Sandy. (Reti laughs) I don't know what I said. I said something came up at the last minute and I can't make it to the department meeting after all. I really apologize, and for personal reasons I'm going to have to abstain from the vote. She later told me she knew. As soon as I wrote her, she knew. Dynes had told me to tell no one. Tell no one. I said, "What about my wife?" He said, "You can tell Kelly." We had discussed this before. Kelly has always been really good. She's always said, "If there's something you want to do, I'll support it."

So I got through that. Then I finished proctoring the exam. It was a little hard to sit through this exam, but I did. I remember as I left the building, I ran into Zack Schlesinger from physics. Zack came over and we chatted for a minute. He said, "What do you think? Do you think Marty [Chemers] has a chance to be acting chancellor again?" He said, "We're taking up a petition to have Marty appointed acting chancellor," which of course I

had no objection to. But I was very noncommittal. I didn't want to be asked to sign that petition. (laughter) And I certainly didn't want to tell him anything.

Reti: Poker-faced.

Blumenthal: I was totally poker-faced. I did call Dave to tell him. I felt obliged to. Dave didn't keep it as quiet as I might have preferred, but I think he was probably acting responsibly. Dave said in a couple of days, or a few days, or a week, or whatever it was, there was going to be a meeting of the provost's advisory council. Denice did not have a cabinet. There was no cabinet. The only group of administrators was called the Campus Provost's Advisory Council, which Dave convened. He convened that in his role as CPEVC. This was in lieu of there being a chancellor's cabinet. I believe the chancellor did, at least on occasion, attend his advisory council. But he ran it. And that was the broad administration's only means of communication.

So, anyway, the day came for this meeting. I came over for the meeting, at Dave's invitation. I came in and sat down. The most vivid memory I have of that discussion was that Bill Ladusaw, when he saw me, and I was wearing shorts as usual (Reti laughs) said to me, "George, are you setting a new sartorial standard for the campus?"

Reti: Oh. (laughter) That's great.

Blumenthal: So obviously Bill knew. I think all of the people in the room knew. I don't remember much about what was discussed at the council that day. I think afterwards Dave was having a meeting with Carl Walsh²⁰⁶ to talk about Silicon Valley and the possibility of a business school, so he invited me to attend that meeting as well. And I did. I asked a lot of questions. I remember afterwards Carl saying, "Boy, it's so nice to have the chancellor be really interested in what we're doing over there," the implication being that Denice had been somewhat distant.

Then, since I was over here anyway, and really had spent very little time inside of the J—

Reti: The J?

Blumenthal: This part of Kerr Hall.

Reti: Oh, it's called the J?

Blumenthal: It's called the J because the part that's behind locked doors is in the shape of a J.

Reti: Oh, okay. I never have heard that before.

Blumenthal: So I decided to go meet Ashish Sahni. When Leslie Sunell, who had been the chief of staff to M.R.C., left—Denice did a search for a new chief of staff or assistant chancellor. I don't know what happened between when Leslie left and she finally hired Ashish. She had tried out various people in the chancellor's office, and nothing seemed to work. The turnover was substantial. So she decided to do a search, a full national search. I got a call one day from a colleague of mine at UCSF, who I knew through the senate, asking me if I would speak to a woman in San Francisco who had made the shortlist for this position. I said sure. So I spoke with this woman whose name I can't remember anymore. I remember she was in charge of all kinds of sexual harassment and all kinds of mediation programs in San Francisco. She'd really been a leader in that. I had met her when I was chair of Privilege and Tenure. She had come down to Santa Cruz to do some kind of a workshop on mediation. I had attended that. I thought she was really good, but I really didn't know her. But anyway, I did remember her. I doubt if she remembered me, but it doesn't matter. I certainly remembered her. We had a very nice conversation. I was really, really torn because I really wanted her to come to UCSC. I thought she was damned good. I thought, wouldn't it be great to have her on the campus? She could really make

things work; despite my misgivings about Denice, if we just had somebody really good working for her, that could really help a lot. I thought this woman was really first class. On the other hand, I felt some obligation to be honest with her about what she was stepping into. So I remember we had a long conversation. I tried to be as honest with her as I could be, but I also tried to be as enthusiastic as I could be about—

Reti: Tricky.

Blumenthal: It was a really awkward time for me. Well, she obviously didn't get hired. I don't know if she ever got an offer and turned it down, or whether she was just not hired. I simply don't know. But ironically, one of the other candidates was also from San Francisco: Ashish. He was ultimately hired here. I didn't know Ashish at all. All I knew was that he had been on campus for two weeks. He was on campus for two weeks before Denice died. One week he was with Denice and then the next week, Denice disappeared when she was hospitalized. And he knew nothing. Then she was dead. After she died, he was the one who organized the memorial service, which took a huge amount of organization and effort. I knew that. I guess I had spoken with both Dave Kliger and his chief of staff at the time. Char, Charlotte Moreno. I knew them both well. I, of course, knew Dave. Char had worked for Dave in Physical and Biological Sciences, so I knew her quite well from those days. I had a lot of trust in Char and in Dave. They told me this guy Ashish had done a really good job. They didn't like what he was hired to do, and they had misgivings, but they felt he had done a good job with the memorial.

So I decided to come and meet him. We met. I had thought through what I wanted to say beforehand. And of course, poor Ashish—He had just taken this new job. He had been the acting vice chancellor of student affairs at San Francisco. He'd given that up. He had taken a new job here. And suddenly, you know, his boss commits suicide. And he had a very

difficult experience his first week. He and Denice were surrounded by students. They were in some car and the police had to come and get them out. It was just, for him, a very trying experience.

Anyway, I showed up. I really had thought this through. I said to him, I had two things I wanted to say to him. Those two things were one, I wanted him to understand who I was, that I was the former chair of the senate—that was my background, that's who I was. And because of that, I was going to be very solicitous of people providing their opinions, including him. My mode of governance was going to be much more by consensus than by fiat. That's just who I was. That's what I was used to and that's what it was going to be. The other thing I said to him is that as my chief of staff, or assistant chancellor, it was important to me that he be open and honest with me. If he disagrees with something, or thinks I'm doing something wrong, he needs to tell me. It doesn't mean I have to agree with him, but I just wanted to assure him that my expectation was that he would be quite frank with me about his views of what I was doing. He had to learn to trust that that's what I was looking for. I must say that after the first few months, every time Ashish wanted to disagree with me, he always reminded me of that conversation. (laughter) And I can't blame him. Think—you know, you're a staff person with no tenure, right?

Reti: It's tricky.

Blumenthal: I think over time he's felt a little bit more comfortable because he's certainly exercised that right hundreds of times. (laughter) So anyway, that was one message I wanted to convey. The other was that I knew he was the assistant chancellor. I also knew that some of the things that Denice had wanted him to do—she wanted him to spy on Student Affairs—there were various things she'd asked him to do which I wasn't comfortable with. I said, "Look, the truth of the matter is, I don't really know what an

assistant chancellor does. I really don't know. But every campus has one. So what I'd like you to do is to figure out what all the other assistant chancellors do on their campus and that's what I want you to do here. Whatever it is, that's what I want you to do."

Reti: Right. Not whatever Denice had necessarily said the job was.

Blumenthal: Exactly. I asked him if he was comfortable with that, and he was very comfortable, he said, in fact, I suspect much more comfortable than continuing on with whatever his original charge was. Those were the two big messages that I wanted to convey to Ashish that first day. I wanted him to at least see me and get a sense of who I was. I don't know whether I scared him out of his wits. (laughter) But it worked. It worked in the sense that we've worked well together these thirteen years. It's been, for me, just delightful to work with Ashish. He's extremely good and insightful, and he makes sure things get done.

Then I asked him if he would introduce me to the person who was the administrative assistant here. That was at the time Maurene Cato. So he introduced me to Maurene. We talked for a few minutes about my getting a computer. I was so naïve that I assumed that they would just give me Denice's computer, which of course they wouldn't do, because they, of course, had to keep everything of hers. What do I know about these things, right? I just assumed that that was the case. So I had a chance to order my own computer. I got a PC rather than a Mac, and other things that I felt a little more comfortable with. So that was that visit. So at that point, I was ready to step in.

Reti: Had you and Dave Kliger had a conversation about Dave remaining on as EVC?

Blumenthal: I think at a certain point Dave came to me, probably after I had assumed office. Basically he initiated that conversation and asked me if I wanted him to stay. Of course, I said, "Of course, 100 percent yes." There was no question. I was very comfortable

with the notion. Although Dave had been the dean and I was one of his chairs before, we'd reversed roles. It didn't make me uncomfortable. I remember saying to him, "I hope it doesn't make you uncomfortable because I don't see it as a big deal." I also was very clear with him that I thought the two of us had very complementary skill sets. I was not an experienced administrator; he was. But I had some vision. I had credibility. I could take on some of the roles of chancellor. I was intending to be an activist acting chancellor and really fulfill those roles. But I really needed somebody who was rock solid to back me up and that's what I was looking for him to do.

**Textbooks: *Twenty-First Century Astronomy*
and *Understanding the Universe***

Reti: Today is January 28, 2019. This is Irene Reti with Chancellor George Blumenthal. We are here for our twentieth interview. Today we're going to start by talking about your books. We haven't talked about your books at all, I don't think.

Blumenthal: I don't think so. There're two of them. I mean, there's no good time to talk about this, so.

Reti: This is sort of its own chapter.

Blumenthal: So I can't remember exactly when I started in on these books, and I'm not sure I can remember the exact date without going through my records. But it had to be back in the '90s sometime. I had contemplated writing two books at one point, both graduate-level books—one book on cosmology, which I even wrote a couple of chapters on, and there was a publisher wanting to publish it. But I felt like the field was changing so fast that I never really did more than one chapter. And then there was another book I thought of doing on electromagnetism, which I thought was a really good idea. Probably had I not become chancellor, I might very well have written it. I'm sure by now many

others have done that. So those are the only books I had thought about until, I think, the early '90s.

Then I had a call from a former UCSC graduate student, Dave Burstein,²⁰⁷ who was a faculty member at Arizona State University. Dave told me that he wanted to write a new kind of textbook in astronomy—new, in the sense that he wanted to make it a larger collaboration, and he wanted it written by research astronomers. The idea is it would be state of the art and it would be written by people who were doing research themselves. That would give it its credibility. He was putting together a team, and he asked me if I would join the endeavor. I think he probably asked Sandy Faber first, and she probably declined, because I think he said something to me about that. But that was fine with me. It didn't bother me any.

I thought about it and thought, well, why the hell not? I was starting to feel like I wanted to look around for other things to do in my life, new challenges. So I figured, what the hell? What was there to lose? Anyway, it was just a gleam in his eye. I didn't know whether he would get an editor or publisher to publish it.

So I said yes, especially after I heard some of the other names. He had Brad Smith,²⁰⁸ who was quite well known. Brad had become almost a TV icon because of *The Voyager's Fly-Bys* in the 1980s. So I figured what the hell. Why not? I joined. I became one of the seven authors of this book. We didn't have a contract yet. I was kind of amused because the editor from W.W. Norton came out to Santa Cruz to see me. We had lunch and talked about the book. I was pretty sure he was checking me out—is this guy serious? And in a way, I wasn't the guy to check out. The theory of the book was that we would get these seven people together, we'd write the book, and then Dave would rewrite it in one voice

so that it would be more coherent. That would be the book. But we'd each have our assigned chapters.

I thought it was not a bad idea, and I thought it was a good meeting with this guy. So then it became a question of writing the proposal. (laughs) That should have given me some warning that it wasn't going to be a straightforward thing. I know a little bit about book proposals because Kelly, my wife, has written many book proposals, and they are almost always approved. She's good. You read her book proposals and why would you ever not want to publish that book? She's good at it, everything from market analysis, to intellectual analysis of what's different, to what its contributions would be. She's really, really good at writing those proposals. So I conceived that we would write something along the lines of what she had done many times over.

But what I got from Dave was much shorter, much less cohesive. So I gave him a detailed set of comments. (laughter) And what he ultimately sent in was not very different than what he had originally written. So I figured okay, what the hell, this isn't going to go anywhere. And then, to my utter astonishment, Norton said they wanted to do it and they'd even give us an advance to do it.

Reti: Wow. Is that unusual in academia?

Blumenthal: It's not unusual for a textbook. It might be unusual for a more advanced book, a monograph. And I know Dave had this image, which I never felt was realistic, of getting rich off the book because George Abell²⁰⁹ from UCLA, had written an extremely popular and original standard book in astronomy and had become wealthy as a result.

Reti: I think that's the book they used when I took it here at UCSC. (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was used for many years here.

Reti: Yeah. With Joe Miller.

Blumenthal: Abell's book was a good book. You can do the back of the envelope calculation and say well, this could do pretty well, also. But there was, by then, competition.

Anyway, Norton signed us up, and we all agreed to do it. We were off to the races. Now I anticipated that off to the races meant that it would take us a year or two to do this book and we'd be done. It ended up taking—oh my God, I don't even remember how long. I'd have to go back to the original paper. It was like five to seven years and it wasn't like it was five to seven joyous and productive years.

So we met as a group, all seven of us. One of my first issues with this project was that all seven were men and I felt like there should be significant representation by women in the group. On the other hand, I wasn't running the show. It wasn't just seven men, it was seven middle-aged white men. (laughter) There was somebody from Dartmouth; there were three people from ASU. There was me. There was Brad, who I think was then at the University of Hawaii.

Reti: And George, ultimately this book ended up being published under the title of what?

Blumenthal: *Twenty-First Century Astronomy*.

Reti: Okay. Because I know you have two books. I want to make sure we're clear on which one we're talking about.

Blumenthal: Right. That was the first one. That was slated to come out around the turn of the century, so we figured that would be a great name. Or maybe even it was slated to come out before the turn of the century. We thought we'd be ahead of our times.

So we went off. Several of us wrote first drafts of at least one chapter apiece and we came back together. Somehow it wasn't coming together. I've never been the most enchanting writer in the world, so I would never claim to be the greatest writer or the most wonderful presenter, but I'm competent. On the other hand, there were at least one or two people within that group who weren't even anywhere near as good as me. But there were others who were much better than me. It was a very, very variable group. No question about the professional expertise within the group however.

Then we were trying to develop a philosophy of what the book should be. Should it be a book that's really state of the art research-oriented? Or new stuff? Or hot button issues? Or sexy astronomy? What should be some of the themes that we would want to have in there? We had a lot of trouble coming to an agreement on what the over-arching themes were.

And then it was coupled to the fact that Dave Burstein, the guy who started it, really was not one of the better writers. So the concept that he was going to take all of our chapters and recast them into his voice—that was doomed to be a disaster. It didn't take the publisher too long to realize that.

So we did a lot of wheel-spinning for a while. We had several meetings of the authors. We did do some work on illustrations, on links. This was still in the early days when you could put together simulations that you could use in conjunctions with books, so we had someone work on that. That was all very exciting and nice, but in terms of the book itself, progress was remarkably slow. Some authors, Ron Greeley,²¹⁰ for example, who's one of the world's experts on the exploration of planets—in fact I think he's got a crater on Mars or something named after him now—a famous guy. But Ron was very busy. I mean, he

was a no BS kind of guy. Brad Smith was also quite famous, but a more easygoing, relaxed person.

It was just not working well. Finally, the publisher stepped in and proposed that we use one of the other authors, Jeff Hester,²¹¹ who was also from ASU, to be effectively the main author of the book. Jeff was smart; Jeff was very articulate and a great writer. Sometimes he went a little far on things, which we later came to call Jeffisms. (Reti laughs) But there was no question Jeff was a great and inspiring writer, and he was, for me, a pleasure to work with. So the publisher finally kind of inserted him instead of Dave as the person who was going to put it all together.

I think I did four chapters in that book. I did my chapters by flying out there a couple of times and staying with Jeff, with just the two of us working on it. Jeff was one of those people who would work till four in the morning. We literally stayed in the living room of his house long after his wife and kids had gone to bed, and we worked, and we just kind of knocked it out and did it. It wasn't that hard, but that's because he was really doing the writing. It's like me dictating it, but he putting it into much more eloquent words than I could have done, and often thinking about ways to express things that were more interesting than I might have come up with. So there's no question that my four chapters were much better for Jeff's participation.

If that had been all there was, it was just me and Jeff and I doing this in isolation, things would have been fine. But a couple of other things were going on. Jeff and Dave came to despise each other. And these two people were in the same department! Jeff was disdainful to Dave, as though he regarded Dave as the biggest idiot in the world and couldn't resist constantly putting him down. Dave, I think was not a sensitive person. So

I think Dave could take some of that behavior. But nonetheless, Dave had his own ego and refused to play second banana to Jeff entirely.

Reti: It's a tricky situation, because the publisher had anointed Jeff the writer.

Blumenthal: Exactly. And clearly we were going to have issues with who is first author on the book and who has ultimate editorial control. Well, the editorial control issue was clearly going to be Jeff, because he had his hands on top of everything. But this got in the way of other authors. My experience was in some ways much easier than the others. I just went out there, worked with Jeff, and was done. I think not everyone had quite the same experience as me.

But this dragged on. And then when we finally got most of the book finished, it was Jeff who ultimately was the person interfacing with the publisher, both on illustrations, because we had to have all these drawings done on the book, you name it.

Then, once most of the book was done, and we were doing the illustrations, the front matter, the end matter, all the itty bitty details that make life so difficult when you do a book, Jeff was just a tyrant to the publisher. He flew out many times to talk with the illustrators; they had to do it a certain way. I remember one incident. We had decided, you know, there's this famous picture of the pillars in the Orion nebula would be on the cover. That picture was taken originally by Jeff on the Hubble Space Telescope, so it's in a sense, it's his picture. We agreed that it would be the cover of the book. That was fine. Everyone was fine with that. And then when they finally put it together and started getting the book together, Jeff discovered that they had reversed the picture so they had it on the cover backwards.

Now honest to God, I swear to you on a stack of Bibles, I couldn't have told you in a million years if it was right side or backwards. How the hell do I know? It's the same thing to me.

(laughter) But Jeff had a fit. He was insisting that they recall all of their copies. I mean, that was the level of difficulty. In fact, the publisher later told me that they had so many fights with him they learned to fear him at W.W. Norton in New York. The funny thing about Jeff was that 85 percent of the time he was right, but that didn't excuse it, because you can still be a huge pain in the you know what, even if you're right. So the publisher had a lot of trouble with this. They wanted it done, too.

So finally, after an agonizingly long time, it got done. The book finally came out, the first edition of *21st Century Astronomy*. It was a great relief. We even had a celebration where everyone got together, and even Jeff and Dave were there. And the publisher came out, as did the vice president of W.W. Norton, who I'd interacted with a few times, Roby Harrington. Afterward, Roby took me aside and said, "Do you think that there should be a second edition?" (laughter) He said, "Because at Norton, we're not so sure." He said, "Even if this book is successful, you have no idea how much psychic energy this took to get this book out. It was horrible." Of course, I knew. I knew how much psychic energy it took from the authors as well. In fact, one of my jokes at the time was that I signed on as an author, but I ended up being a mediator, a peacemaker, much more than an author, because I did get along with everybody.

So I had a meeting with Roby, the Norton vice president, and ultimately he came up with a proposed scheme. He put down a set of conditions for there to be a second edition of the book. The set of conditions were that three of the authors had to be in charge. Those three were me, Brad Smith, and Howard Voss,²¹² who was then chair of the physics department at Arizona State and was doing the physics part of the book. He regarded the three of us as the responsible adults in the room and said that we could organize it and do anything we wanted, but we had to have dictatorial powers over the book.

So that was the basis on which we agreed to do a second edition, and then the publisher agreed to do a second edition. We ultimately got Dave to agree. Dave was pretty easy-going about it. He was fine. He was okay with doing that. Jeff was not fine. First of all, the three of us, the troika, had made a decision that we would remove one of the authors from the book who we felt hadn't contributed enough. It probably wasn't even his fault, but that's a whole other story. Nevertheless, we felt we didn't need the seventh person. In my mind, I was always thinking we were going to bring in some new blood. So that left six. Jeff was resistant, but we finally got him to agree, that as long as he had overall charge of the writing of the book and content stuff, that he would agree that the three of us would have final authority. So that was the basis on which we started the second edition.

Reti: How much after the first one? And how did the first one do?

Blumenthal: The first one did okay. It didn't do great, but textbooks rarely do great in the first edition.

Reti: I see. So that is part of what the general plan is.

Blumenthal: Yeah. You really want to keep them going for a few years to make them very, very successful. So the publisher was fine with how successful it was. It wasn't like super-duper, but it was okay.

So we started the second edition. The understanding was that the troika would be in overall charge; Jeff would lead the project as being the functional leader and we'd move it forward.

Then it kind of all went to hell. For Howard, the physics chair, his wife became very ill throughout most of the writing of the new edition of the book. She was getting sicker and

sicker, and she ultimately passed away. Howard could devote very little time. And so although we were having weekly phone calls, and he joined at first, he soon dropped out.

Ron Greeley, the famous planetologist guy, he promised he'd be heavily involved. Well he was, at the end of the day, willing to do his chapter. And maybe that was good enough. I didn't have a problem with that. But he certainly didn't participate in the weekly calls or any of the intellectual aspects of the book.

Soon after we began, Jeff stopped participating. Then Dave, who did participate at first—he did do a few chapters and do a bit of writing—basically stopped and soon it became apparent there was something really wrong with him. Dave, it turned out, had come down with Pick's disease, which is a form of dementia. It's kind of like early Alzheimer's, but patients are more violent than Alzheimer's patients. He started going through serious decline during that second edition, and basically didn't participate.

So at the end of the day, the two participants left, who did the bulk of the work, were Brad Smith and me. Brad was the one who did most of the work. This was not a 50/50 split. This was an 80/20 split, eighty being Brad, and 20 being me. Brad is definitely the hero of the second edition. Brad and I would talk every week, and we'd go through and do whatever we needed. We kept to the plan. We're very proud of the fact that we got the book in on time, which Norton very much appreciated. So we got it done, but it was kind of funny that it ended up just being the two of us. Ultimately, around the end of that project, Dave died because Pick's disease is fatal about a year after diagnosis.

Reti: That's very sad.

Blumenthal: Very sad indeed.

And then we had this big crisis, which is really funny to think about. So we'd finished the book. We're ready to go to press with it. The IAU, the International Astronomical Union was meeting in Europe somewhere, and they're voting on whether or not to keep Pluto as a planet. Pluto isn't my thing. I kind of wanted Pluto to stay a planet because I like to be able to show the planets and put in Mickey Mouse's dog for the last one. (laughter) But I think the motivations for demoting Pluto made sense. It was very controversial. It was not an easy vote. It was an in-person vote. It's interesting. The IAU votes by mail, so you don't have to be at the meeting to vote. But at the time, it was a vote in person and they voted to change Pluto to a dwarf planet just as we were ready to go to press. So we had to hurriedly go back into the page proofs and change some things. We knew it might happen, so we were a little bit prepared. But we had to make a bunch of changes at the very last minute and that was just not easy. We did it, and we got the book done, and that became the second edition.

And then the question is, what do you do about the third edition? So by the third edition, Dave was gone; the other guy from Dartmouth had long gone. I was unclear what to do about Ron. I had no objection to him staying, but I knew Ron would not contribute a whole lot more. I wanted to bring on another author. And so I asked a former postdoc at Santa Cruz who was then at the University of Arizona whether she would be interested in coming on. But she had just had two children, and she was still a relatively junior faculty member, even though she was an outstanding teacher. She turned me down at the end, and I can't say I blame her.

And then I asked Laura Kay,²¹³ who's another former student from Santa Cruz. Laura is at Barnard College and Columbia University. Laura and I had a good relationship when she was here. She didn't work for me, but I knew her well. Laura agreed. So Laura joined. For the third edition, Brad and I wanted Laura to be the primary author. I guess at first

we still thought Jeff would come back. So we had a meeting, and Jeff came to the meeting. We talked about reorganizing part four of the book. We were going to do some really different things with the third edition. It was really quite exciting. Everyone was onboard. It looked like we were a go. The four key people were going to be Brad, me, Laura, and Jeff. But it soon became apparent Jeff wasn't doing anything. Eventually he essentially admitted as much and said he didn't want anything further to do with the book. It just brought up unfortunate memories to him that he just didn't want to deal with. I can understand that. I certainly didn't want to be a part of ruining his life.

Jeff wanted to be bought out of his contract. I was happy to leave that with Norton, because our contracts did have provisions for people leaving the book. Jeff, of course, wanted something special. I wanted to stay out of it. I don't think that ended particularly happy between Jeff and Norton. But Jeff and I occasionally still contact each other and stay in touch. I like Jeff a lot, but he moved on and I moved on.

So ultimately the third edition was Brad, Laura, me. I think Howard may have been a part of that as well. I can't remember anymore because Howard was starting to get ill, so he started dropping out, and ultimately he passed away as well, not too long after his wife died.

But so we started having our weekly calls. And for a year or however long we did it, it was the three of us, Laura, Brad, and me. Laura played a key role in getting that book done. Again, my contributions have always been at the 15 to 20 percent level. I don't claim any more credit than that, although I think I contribute level-headedness to the overall project.

So the third edition got done, and it was a lot better. The third edition, Laura insisted on starting a project which carried over to the next few editions as well, namely to take out

many of the Jeffisms. Jeff had a lot of politics, political commentary, social commentary in the book, some of which I liked, but she felt it was inappropriate in a book like ours. Frankly, at some level, she's right. I was okay with pushing the boundaries, but not everyone is.

Reti: I'm trying to imagine how you would make a connection between astronomical research and social commentary. Was it the politics of scientific research, what gets funded?

Blumenthal: Or even the social politics of the day. Just things come up. Climate change is one such issue.

Anyway, the third edition went well. So it was clear at that point that it was Brad, and by then I think Ron dropped out. Ron died a few years after that himself. I told you, it was all middle-aged white guys to begin with. But now we had a woman on the book, playing an important role. Laura was really good. I chose Laura because when she was a student here, she was an outstanding, gifted teacher. She understands pedagogy and she follows research on pedagogy. So I just thought that was exactly what we needed to do.

Brad was always a very easygoing person, easy to work with. Brad himself died last year. In fact, I gave one of the eulogies at his funeral in Tucson. But, well, I guess I'll come to that.

The book we published, *21st Century Astronomy*, was a big, thick book. We conceived it as an astronomy textbook for a year-long course. Some people tried to use it for a semester, but it was too much to do in a semester, by far. So the publisher wanted a semester book, and wanted us to do that. But we were all busy. It's not like we had a lot of time to take on yet another book on the same cycle. So we wanted to bring on another author. We went through about six or seven editors in all these years. Some books had

two or three editors before they finally came out. But then everything stabilized. And by the fourth edition, we had an editor who's still with us today.

Reti: Oh, great.

Blumenthal: Maybe.

Reti: Not so great? Okay. (laughs)

Blumenthal: A very controlling individual, shall we say, but certainly somebody who's very professional in his own way. Very controlling. In any event, he had a candidate and we interviewed her. Her name is Stacy Palen,²¹⁴ from Weber State University in Utah, which is a teaching college. Stacy was very much into astronomy education. She had reviewed our book previously, so she was familiar with it. So we brought her on to be the lead author on a shortened version of the book. We'd give that a try for a year and see how that worked. So it worked. We basically wrote a shortened version of the book, which we called *Understanding Our Universe*. It was pretty successful from the get-go.

Reti: When the book came out—what does the author of a textbook do to promote the book, if anything?

Blumenthal: That's a perfectly fair question. So I will give you two answers. You could ask what did I do to promote the book and the answer's very clear on that one: nothing. I did zero. I didn't do anything. I kind of refused to do anything. And certainly after I became chancellor, I felt doubly strongly that I shouldn't do anything. But even before I was chancellor, I had no interest in doing promotion.

But the other answer to your question is I know that both Stacy and Laura have gone to meetings of the American Astronomical Society, where they have booths set up, where they have receptions sponsored by publishers. They do things like that. I know that Stacy

goes and meets annually with the sales representatives at Norton to talk about what are the selling points of the book. So there are things that the authors do. I'm happy that Laura and Stacy have done many of those things. I'm also happy that I didn't do those things.

So that established a pretty stable relationship. We were then down to four authors: Brad, Stacy, Laura, and me. We had many calls together and worked very well together through several editions of both books. We got into a regular schedule, so that every three years we would have a new edition of each of the two books. So it would be intense work for a year, and then intense work for a year, and then a year of rest. And then intense work for a year, and so on. It's a lot of efforts to keep those books up to date.

Reti: Yeah. I'm kind of amazed.

Blumenthal: And I've done that for the last many, many years now. So we just completed—now a few editions later, Brad decided to drop out. He was by then in his eighties and he decided he had other interests and he'd had enough. So he dropped out, which we were all very sad about because Brad was a really good guy. And in fact, when he dropped out, I remember Stacy and Laura and I all went down to Santa Fe, NM to take him and his wife to dinner. That's how much we cared about him. At the time, he lived near Los Alamos. And then when he died last year, all three of us went out to his memorial service because we all really had affection for Brad.

But we've kept it going. We just completed the sixth edition of *21st Century Astronomy* and we have completed the third edition of *Understanding Our Universe*. We're going to start the fourth edition of *Understanding Our Universe* probably next June, at least, my involvement will start next June.

But it hasn't all been smooth, in the sense that the editor at Norton has not exactly had a close relationship with Laura. Laura is not somebody who's easily dominated. She's a bit

of a New York Jew, in a sense. (laughter) She's not afraid to say what she thinks, which I think is part of her charm. She and the editor have not gotten along well together. Stacy, on the other hand, is much more laidback and has gotten along fairly well with the editor.

But the sniping and disagreements between the editor and Laura have accelerated to the point where they wanted Laura to leave the book. So Laura decided to drop out after the sixth edition of *21C*. That was at the end of last year.

And then there were two.

Reti: (laughs) Oh my gosh, George.

Blumenthal: So of course I had to make a decision about what to do. I'm not real thrilled with the editor at Norton myself. I'm not real thrilled, and I'm not real thrilled how they treated Laura. I think that they treated her poorly considering how much work she's done and how she's made that book a success. So the issue of a seventh edition of *21C* is still far off in the distance as far as I'm concerned. The next major project is supposed to be *Understanding Our Universe*, which is the book that Stacy is the primary author of. I had a conversation with Stacy a few months ago. I would have been fine if she had asked me to leave so she would do it herself or bring on somebody else. But she wanted me to stay on. I'm interested enough to keep it going. So Stacy and I together will do the next, I don't necessarily mean the last, but the fourth edition of *Understanding Our Universe*. And beyond that, I don't know. I mean, part of me loved the idea of doing that because it's a project I can do after I retire.

Reti: I was thinking that.

Blumenthal: On the other hand, I've triple-booked all my time after I retire. Big mistake.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, George.

Blumenthal: So we'll see how that works. But certainly, there's not going to be an issue for me working with Stacy. She's very easy to work with. We'll see beyond that. But I was really proud of the fact that the last couple of editions—I'd mentioned that we started with seven middle-aged men, white men. And we ended up with one middle-aged white, maybe older white man, and two women. I feel like we were more attuned to the time.²¹⁵

So that's kind of where we are on the books, as we stand. What next? Acting chancellor.

“All of this is Mine?”: Becoming Acting Chancellor

So, it was weird. I still remember my first official day. I came to campus. When I got to campus, I had some extra time and I just literally drove around campus. I drove the west side of the campus and then drove the whole loop a couple of times. And I'm thinking, all of this is mine.

Reti: (laughs) Were you terrified? Excited?

Blumenthal: I was in in awe. It just didn't seem quite right that little old me would be in charge of this vast organization and this vast chunk of land and all that it entails. It was awe-inspiring to realize what I'd been left with. I mean, I knew it intellectually. But driving here that day brought it home to me.

Then I finally came up to the office and I think that was the first time I actually saw the office itself. I think when I'd been here before, I had just talked to Maurene, who was Margaret McGuire's predecessor, at her office. I don't think I had really looked in here, or paid any attention in here.

So I came into the office and looked around. Honestly, it was almost the same as it is today. Thirteen years to today it remains almost identical. There are only two differences. One is that we bought that easy chair. And the other is that I changed out the chair in front

of the computer because it didn't fit me right. Other than that, the furniture is the same. The stuff on the walls is all mine, but I haven't changed anything else.

So, yeah, it was exciting to come here. The person who used to be in the office right over there behind that wall was Liz Irwin. That was also kind of weird. When M.R.C. was chancellor, I know Liz traveled everywhere with her and just was constantly at her elbow. I gather that when Denice was chancellor, it was a very similar situation. They were inseparable. But I didn't come up through the administrative ranks, so I didn't feel comfortable having someone attached to me, if you understand what I mean.

Reti: (laughs) I do understand.

Blumenthal: She kind of wanted to attach herself to me. I had nothing against Liz. Please don't misunderstand—she's a very nice woman. But I just didn't want that. And yet, I had to do a number of things. One of the things she did is she took me downtown to some photographer who took a gazillion pictures. I had to bring several jackets and different ties with the jackets. Oh my God, it was just—to me it was awful doing things like that. I really didn't like it, but I did it. And I tried to be independent of Liz without offending her, but I'm not sure how well that worked. I tried to be honest with her about what my needs were.

The first day I thought, I should call M.R.C. M.R.C. had not yet gone to the University of Hawaii, so she was in Davis. I felt like I owed it to M.R.C. to call her and let her know that I was stepping in as acting chancellor, and to thank her for the help she'd given me along the way. So I called her up and we had this most interesting conversation. It was very pleasant. So first of all, she was well aware—M.R.C. had her ear to the ground. She knew everything that was happening long before anyone else, I think through the Office of the

President, as well as people on campus, so I wasn't telling her anything she didn't know. I still felt it was the right thing for me to do to call her.

Then she said to me, "George, I've never told you this, but I want to tell you something." I said, sure. She said, "Do you remember the scandal that erupted around my owning property with Lynda Goff that ultimately led to my leaving?" I said, yeah. She said, "Well, I was told," she said, "that it was you who broke that story. You, George Blumenthal." I was stunned, I mean, just utterly stunned when she said that because that is just something I would never do. I was almost literally knocked off my chair when she said that. So I think I stammered something like, "M.R.C., that isn't true." And she was very nice. She said she knew it wasn't true from the first moment. She said that's why she never mentioned it to me. She said, "I had never a doubt in my mind that it wasn't true." But she said, "I'm telling you this to illustrate a point." She said, "My primary advice to you right now is that when you're dealing with the Office of the President, watch your back." That was her advice to me as chancellor: watch my back. I was grateful to her for saying that. I knew exactly who she was talking about. She was talking about Bruce Darling, who she had no faith in or trust in, and the staff that worked for him. He was the vice president of external relations in the Office of the President. He was there before she was. He was always very powerful. He very much had Dynes' ear and he had a great relationship with the regents. Many people felt that he wanted to be president, both when Dynes came in and when Yudof came in. Yudof didn't like him at all, and he quickly left after Yudof arrived. But Bruce Darling was and is one of the smartest people I know. He could convince me sometimes to change my mind on issues just on the basis of logic and reasonableness. I loved the way he put together arguments. I think he did a great job as the acting vice president of lab management when the labs were in trouble. But Bruce is

not somebody I would have felt comfortable trusting. Anyway, I thought it was interesting that M.R.C. would give such advice, and I was shocked by her telling me that story.

I think either that day or the next day I called Cynthia Mathews. Cynthia is an old friend. I stayed with Bill and Cynthia when I first got to Santa Cruz.

Reti: Your very first real connection here.

Blumenthal: She was then on the city council. So I gave her a call and it was an interesting conversation because one of the things she said in the conversation was that I should seriously consider merging the UCSC Fire Department with the city fire department. She said that this would really make sense from a whole bunch of different perspectives and that I should call the city fire chief to hear his perspective.

So I did. I called the fire chief and talked to him and he explained to me all the advantages for both sides if we did that. And then I talked to Tom Vani,²¹⁶ who was our vice chancellor of business and administrative services. And after talking to Tom and a few other people, it was clear this was not conceivably doable, that nobody trusted anybody. The people here didn't trust the people in the city, and it was also true the people in the city didn't trust the staff here. To make a deal to do something like that, you really have to do this out of a measure of trust. I think one of the things I'm most proud of is that by a few years later, we were able to do it. But at that point, it was an impossibility. So I abandoned that quickly.

Reti: When you were speaking with Cynthia, did the subject of town/gown relations come up?

Blumenthal: Oh, yes, of course. I think Cynthia was pleased. She understood that I knew and understood what some of the town/gown relationship issues were. Cynthia's smart

enough to know that there was not going to be any silver bullets that was going to solve it in one fell swoop. And it was made even more awkward by the then-status of the LRDP, which I'll come to.

It may have been the first day or the second day, but I remember I was sitting around. For me, this was just indicative of what I'd stepped into. I had stayed late; it was maybe six o'clock or something. Most people had gone home and I was in here working on something. Bill Ladusaw came by. I've always liked Bill. Bill was a great guy, just a wonderful man. Bill came in and he said, "George, can I talk to you?" I said sure. And he said, "Well, you sent me an email today." I said yeah. I'd seen an article in some newspaper online and I'd sent it to him with a note saying FYI. And he said, "I have to ask you this. What are your expectations?"

I said, "Expectations?"

He said, "Yes. What do you want for me to do?"

I was completely puzzled. I said, "Well, Bill, my expectation is that if the article looks interesting, you'll read it. And having read the article, if you have any commentary about it, I'd imagine you would send me a little note saying what the commentary is. But I don't understand what you're asking."

He said, "Well, Denice expected whenever she sent an email to anyone in senior management that they had to have a response to her within forty-eight hours. So having gotten this from you, I didn't know what your expectations were." I was just completely floored by this and from Bill, of all people. Bill had the courage to come talk to me about it, but we had a relationship even beforehand. But oh my God, that's just so not me to put in some general rule. I didn't want to be told that I couldn't just casually pass a lot of things to people to read. But it also brought home to me that, not only were things tough

here, but that I was in a different position and I had to be cognizant of the fact that I was in a position of such perceived power that something that I regarded as nothing was something that others might take very, very seriously. So that was a good lesson for me as well.

Then the other thing that struck me from day one—oh, God, I couldn't believe it. (laughs) We were in July, and Maurene [Catto], Margaret's predecessor, starts on the first day asking me about holiday cards. (Reti laughs) I can't even begin to express my astonishment that that conversation could be happening before December. But of course they have to put together their holiday card list. Who did I want on those lists? What kind of design were we going to have for the holiday cards? You have to order these way in advance, etcetera. She was asking me for a million decisions. In fact, telling Kelly about that is what made us come up with the idea of the photo contest, which you [the interviewer] are this year's winner of. But that's how that came about. But oh my god, for me, holiday cards are something I might do in mid-December. I usually just would do a few before I got tired and quit. (Reti laughs) That first year, I remember they gave me hundreds of cards to sign personally. University Relations wanted me to write notes to at least two or three hundred of those recipients, personal notes because, of course, handwritten notes from a chancellor mean a lot. I think that first year I did it, I literally sat in here for many hours writing these damned notes. Over the years, my participation in that has declined steadily.

One thing I definitely remember about the first day was coming home and having dinner with Kelly. We were both tired, so we decided to go to Baker's Square, a not particularly exciting restaurant in Los Gatos. Just as we sat down, I got a call from Sandy Faber, who was really excited about my assuming office. She invited Kelly and me to come over for

dinner that evening to celebrate. When I told her where we were already at dinner, she was appalled.

Soon after I was appointed, we had the first regents meeting in July. So I went up to the regents meeting. I was sitting at the chancellors' table. The chancellors' table was a bit off from the main table. It was kind of weird being there, because normally as a faculty representative, I was at the same table as the regents. Now I was at the chancellors' table, but there was a microphone in front of me. So they put microphones at least then at the chancellors' table.

I'm sitting there listening to the regents' meeting and all of a sudden, one of the regents said something that I thought was really just egregiously wrong. I just couldn't bear it. So I raised my hand to be recognized. Marye Anne Fox, who was the chancellor at San Diego, was sitting next to me. When she saw that I had raised my hand, she grabbed my arm and she pulled it down. She said to me very sternly, "George, you have to understand. Now that you're a chancellor, you are here to be seen and not heard."

Reti: (laughs) What's the microphone doing there? Symbolic microphone.

Blumenthal: Literally for the first few years I was chancellor, chancellors were simply not encouraged to say anything. They were actively discouraged from saying anything. We were all just completely bumps on a log. Many hundreds of thousands of dollars of salary just sitting there doing nothing. In fact, one of the chancellors, France Córdova,²¹⁷ I remember she used to sit back there playing Sudoku. She'd have these books of Sudoku that she would hide inside an official-looking folder and she would play Sudoku. We were not taken that seriously. But that was my big memory of the first regents meeting as acting chancellor.

Demonstration at the Regents Meeting, UCSC Humanities Lecture Hall

The other thing with the regents was that there was a regents visit slated to come to Santa Cruz in late September or early October. I don't remember exactly the date. In those days, the regents would meet six times a year for their regular meetings, and then in between meetings, usually three times a year, they would have a regents visit to a campus. Typically on regents visits, relatively few regents showed up. It would be three or four regents, typically, plus the alumni regents, plus the faculty representatives. It was the lower-ranked ex officio people, like the faculty representatives and the alumni regents, who were so committed that you could always be sure they would come. But for the regularly appointed regents, only a handful would show up and they would have a meeting on a campus. Ostensibly, the purpose of the meeting is to learn more about the campus and to explore the campus. And as I said, for years they did three of those a year. I went on those when I was faculty representative to the regents. Some of those were very good, and some were remarkably boring.

Well, as luck would have it, that first year when I was acting chancellor they had a meeting in Santa Cruz. It had long been scheduled. And we made a decision that we'd give them tours of campus, but the main part of the meeting was going to be held at the brand-new, just-opened Humanities Lecture Hall. It had literally just opened. Then after the main part of that meeting, we were going to have everyone come over to University Center and have a big dinner with members of the community. That was the theory.

Then we got word that there was going to be a big student demonstration—surprise, surprise—with the regents on campus. (Reti laughs) The demonstration was going to start at the graduate plaza. So I decided to go over to the graduate plaza and talk to the students, thinking that maybe reasoning would help alleviate some of the stresses of that visit. Well,

nothing could be further from reality— I did go; I did say some things. I wasn't treated badly, but I was largely ignored.

Then I had to get over to the regents meeting at the Humanities Building. Well, sure enough, there was a big demonstration and a march over to the Humanities Building. And as part of the demonstration, a decision was made by the students to basically lock the regents in the building. So they closed off the entrances and exits so you couldn't get in or out of the Humanities Lecture Hall.

So we held this meeting with the regents and some members of the community inside and all the demonstrators outside marching around the building shouting, but with the doors blockaded so that you couldn't open the doors. It was an interesting situation. Associate Chancellor Ashish Sahni was outside the building. We were in communications with Ashish and the police who were outside. But there weren't anywhere near enough police to control the crowd. It was a bloody mess.

Then it was exacerbated because some of the regents, particularly one of them, Judy Hopkinson, wanted to go outside to meet with the students. Ashish and I had a bunch of backs and forth about that and finally he agreed that if they would guarantee that she would be treated safely and allowed back into the building when she was done talking with them, if they would make certain guarantees like that, then we could make it happen. They refused. So I was put in the position of having to tell Judy that she couldn't go outside to meet with the students, that we didn't feel comfortable when they wouldn't agree to the conditions that we had set for that to happen. Judy is not an easy woman to say no to.

This went on for a few hours. At a certain point, some of the police who were inside the building tried to go out to clear the entrances. There was a big melee and at the end of that melee, they retreated back in the building, having used their mace. And they brought

with them one of the students who had, they said, attacked a police officer and bitten the police officer. She was screaming. So now we had all the regents in there plus this screaming student. It was a bloody nightmare and it kept going on and on and on. And of course we couldn't leave until they got in some extra police, I think from the city or wherever, to help clear the exits so that we could safely get people out. The last thing I wanted was for somebody to get hurt.

A couple of the city community members who were there tried to leave. One of them got spit on and another one was pushed, kind of assaulted as he left. It was a very, very bad situation and we were in there for many hours. Furthermore, there is no plumbing or bathrooms inside the lecture hall. And here I am, I'm the brand-new chancellor in charge of all this.

Reti: Did the students have a specific agenda that they wanted, a platform?

Blumenthal: They had many agendas. It was not like it was one thing. The regents are just so good a target. So it was one of these lists, an all-encompassing list. I don't think students have ever learned that if they had one thing, they might actually have a shot. But once you put together a whole list, because every student group wants to have their key issue on the list, no one takes that seriously.

So we finally got out of there, went to the dinner. I remember my shirt was soaking wet, because I was just so nervous. How had I represented the campus in a situation like this? It was so embarrassing. And there were, for this visit, I think five or six of the appointed regents, plus the alumni. So there was a significant turnout.

Reti: Had this kind of thing happened on other campuses?

Blumenthal: Nothing like this, not during my time. Maybe before it. Nothing like that at other UC campuses. We were clearly unique. (Reti laughs)

Anyway, we finally got over to the dinner. And I was just so impressed. I did give my remarks at dinner. People were very nice and relaxed. I was surprised at how little fallout there was at the dinner afterwards. People had been inconvenienced, and then having this screaming woman who was later charged with a felony. She became a cause celebre for the whole year. It ended up being not as big a deal as it looked like at first. But certainly, it was not my choice for how to begin. By the way, that visit was the last regents visit ever done to any campus.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Beforehand, they would do these three times a year, they just stopped doing them after Santa Cruz. I guess having visited us, there was no need to ever do any more.

The next regents meeting [not visit] was in Los Angeles, and they were holding it at Covel Commons, which is on the third floor of a building. And in the middle of the regents meeting, Odessa Johnson,²¹⁸ who was one of the regents—and I'd known Odessa for years; she's a retired schoolteacher from Fresno—Odessa got up from the regents table and walked over to where the chancellors were sitting. She walked over to me and she said, "Chancellor Blumenthal." She never called me Chancellor Blumenthal. It was always George. But she called me Chancellor Blumenthal. She said, "Chancellor Blumenthal." I said, yeah? She said, "Do you hear that sound outside?" I said yeah. She said, "Do you know what it is?"

I said, "Yes, it's a student demonstration."

She said, “You know, I’ve been a regent for six years and I learned something new at Santa Cruz last month.”

I said, “What did you learn at Santa Cruz last month, Odessa?”

She said, “I learned that when I hear that sound, I’ve got to do two things. I’ve got to get a donut, and I’ve got to pee.” (Reti laughs) I swear, that’s true. That’s what she said.

Reti: Before they come and block your way out.

Blumenthal: Well, remember, the Humanities Lecture Hall has no restrooms.

Reti: I do remember that. Oh, God.

Blumenthal: So that was the regents visit.

A Traumatized Campus:

Facilitating Healing from Chancellor Denton’s Death

All right. Now let me say a little bit about the recovery from Denice [Denton]. I realized from the beginning that I needed a message for the campus. I needed to acknowledge Denice’s death in a way that was respectful to her memory, and yet allowed us to move on. So I adopted a message of talking about the upward trajectory of the campus, and wanting to continue that upward trajectory. I thought that that was respectful to the past. It was really M.R.C. who had pushed the campus particularly onto a steep upward trajectory, but that was the direction I wanted the campus to continue to go in. Then the other thing is that one of Denice’s themes had been excellence through diversity. So I started talking as well about excellence *and* diversity.

Reti: Right. And we talked about how you disagreed with that exact wording.

Blumenthal: It was a little bit of a perversion of Denice's message, but I thought it was not inconsistent with Denice's message, and it was one that I felt a lot more comfortable with excellence *and* diversity, rather than excellence *through* diversity. Little did I know that a preposition could make me so uncomfortable.

But it was clear there were psychological burdens. So I consulted with Dave Kliger, and we agreed to bring in an organizational psychologist to work primarily with the senior management team and the deans to assess the psychological burdens on people here. The burdens were pretty extreme. Some people had been kind of sucked into Denice's orbit and sucked into her craziness about demonstrations and the like. As I mentioned earlier, Denice refused or could not stay home alone at night, so she was constantly asking people here to stay with her at night. It wasn't a sexual thing. I don't think there was anything of a romantic or sexual nature to that. She felt unsafe being at University House alone at night. And her partner, I don't think she ever came and stayed in Santa Cruz at University House. So Denice was very much alone. So she did prevail on people within the administration to come and stay with her. I think, in my opinion, there was a high level of inappropriateness there. It's one thing to ask a friend to help. It's even okay, it seems to me, to ask a professional colleague or an underling to help in an emergency. If I were sick and I needed to be taken somewhere, I don't think it would be horrible to ask Margaret to do it. But on the other hand, I don't think that that should be the *modus operandi* for regular life, if you know what I mean. If she were really afraid to be alone, she should have hired someone to stay with her, or found somebody from out of town who was a friend who would come and stay with her. I don't think it was a reasonable burden for members of the administration. So there was that aspect of it that required some recovery.

Ultimately, when we brought in the psychologist, she went and met with everybody in the senior management group, including me, and tried to assess what the scars were, what

the injuries were, what the PTSD was, in a sense. Suicide has effects on people and it could be really different than you might expect. I had a friend who committed suicide many years ago and I remember for years I felt guilty because I felt like gee, if I had been more perceptive, maybe I could have intervened and stopped that from happening. It took me years to come to realize that the appropriate emotion should have been anger, that actually I really did feel angry at her for doing that. But that didn't come easy. It took me years to understand that anger was a much more appropriate emotional reaction.

Anyway, she found that there were some people who needed some help, and she encouraged them to get help. There were people who needed help who would not agree to do that. I think a good example was Liz, who I think, who would never admit the extent to which she was hurt by Denice's suicide. She just wouldn't talk about it. She was always trying to be cheerful and upbeat. And at a certain point, I even tried to reason with her. And she just wouldn't go there. And I'm convinced one of the reasons Liz decided to retire when she did was because she had to in some ways distance herself from the campus. And maybe that was good. I sincerely hope that that was a good decision for her that helped her get past this. But I never believed for a minute that Liz had overcome it while she was here.

I'm not picking on her. Eventually the psychologist had a joint meeting where people talked collectively about their feelings about Denice and the suicide. It was really, I think, a very helpful thing to have done. There were people in that meeting who were crying, months after the event.

Reti: Oh, I believe it.

Blumenthal: I think it was really good that we did that. The person we brought in was quite professional and did an excellent job. I'm sure it was still not enough, but I think it was good that we did it.

The other thing I realized is that one of the other things that I needed to do was to really show myself around campus. I'd been the senate chair and I'd been here a long time, but I wasn't well known throughout the campus. So I thought it was really important that I just go out and visit everything, certainly visit MBEST, visit University Extension, Long Marine Lab, but also visit all of the various places on the campus itself, so that everybody, faculty and staff and students could have, if they wanted to, a chance to meet the new acting chancellor. I didn't think I had any magic formulas, but I'm a pretty WYSIWYG person: what you see is what you got. I think that comes across, whether I try to or not. I thought that it was important that people understood that I was there, I was present, and would remain present, especially since Denice was perceived as not having remained present. That's why I wanted to have that contrast there, so people would feel that there really wasn't a vacuum up on top.

So I went everywhere on campus. I pretty much gave the same speech everywhere. I always started out with my silly joke. I made a joke about sometimes talking too long, and I told the story of how students can evaluate you when you teach a class. I said I once taught a course in general relativity and a student in the class wrote in their evaluation that if she had only two hours left to live, she'd like to spend them in my class. And everyone kind of titters a little bit. And then the second line was, "Because every hour in your class feels like an eternity."

Reti: (laughs) Extend her life.

Blumenthal: But it's kind of a self-effacing joke and it put people at ease. So I used it a lot. I told it so many times it started to feel stale, and I could never tell it again. But I think that was really successful. I think people felt a lot more comfortable seeing me around and seeing my presence.

The Climate Report

But I had to deal with a bunch of stuff. One issue I had to deal with was the climate report. Denice had made a commitment to do a climate study of the campus and she'd enlisted the Academic Senate to do it. It was kind of owned jointly by the chancellor and the Academic Senate, but it was mostly conducted by the senate. They had done a lot of work. I thought that was good. I thought that we should do a climate study of the campus. But I met with the chair of the committee that was doing it, Gina Dent, who kindly shared with me a first draft of the report. I also became aware through Fay Crosby, who was then the chair of the senate, that there were some privacy issues that had arisen with regard to how the data was used in the report. I don't remember the details, except that they had a bunch of data they had taken and some of it was in cells that were so sparse that there were fears that the identity could be known of the respondents. Then some of the data had been lost or misplaced, so there was a lot of fear that everything was invalidated.

I couldn't do anything about the data. That was not my doing and there was nothing I could do to solve it. The report itself was interesting. I, in some ways, didn't have any problems with the findings or recommendations of the report. I had a lot of trouble with the body of the report, which was long. It was very densely written, very academically written. I did have a lot of problems with that, largely because I had concerns about whether or not every sentence really was supported by the evidence that it cited. I was really concerned about what that report would feel like if it, in certain parts of campus,

had it been released; it might have been attacked. I thought that would be very divisive to the campus. But there wasn't much I could do about that since it had been written basically by a senate group.

But at the end of the day, the methodological issues with regard to the data meant that they couldn't release the body of the report. It was the best of all worlds. At the end of the day, they released the findings and recommendations, which I thought was just fine. There were a number of recommendations. They were good, well thought through. I had no problem with that whatsoever. Fortunately, they never actually released the report itself. I was just as glad that that didn't happen. Maybe nothing bad would have happened, but I could easily see it going south.

So I think everyone was either happy or reasonably happy. I think Gina wanted to get it out, and I was glad that we got out the recommendations. I was glad that we didn't release anything that could be attacked for not having been sensitive to the data privacy issues. So we had to deal with that.

Town-Gown Relations and the Long Range Development Plan of 2005

Then right after I was appointed, there was a meeting of the city council. The city council, at least then, used to meet in the evening, but they'd also have an afternoon meeting, which had a public period. I decided to go visit the city council because the LRDP was broiling. A lot of anger about it existed in the community. I thought I would at least visit the city and see whether or not I could tamp down some of the anger.

So I decided to go. I went alone. I made a point of going alone. The city council people were very nice. They were so impressed that I'd come. I think they were not used to chancellors coming down and visiting them like that, especially alone. I was trying to indicate to them that I understood their issues. I might not agree with them, but I at least

understood them. And when you parrot back somebody's viewpoint to them, it does help get the conversation further if they know that you really do understand what they're talking about. So we actually had a nice conversation. But they basically said to me, boy, if this had happened a year ago, this would have been great. But it's probably too late to stave off conflict.

Reti: Because the LRDP was marching along.

Blumenthal: Yeah, because the LRDP was nearing its end and they knew that we were on a collision pathway. But at least people were willing to talk to each other, and they knew that I wasn't going to be the enemy. I really was sincere in wanting to be sensitive to and responsive to the concerns of the citizens, of the city.

The other place I visited was the Cabrillo College board. That also kind of surprised me because very soon after I arrived in the chancellor's office, I had a talk with Brian King,²¹⁹ who was then the president of Cabrillo College. Brian and I hit it off right away. He asked me whether or not we could provide some housing for Cabrillo College students. It turned out at that particular point in time, thirteen years ago, we had some extra housing, not a lot, but we had some. And they didn't have much need, but they had some. So we agreed we would sign a memorandum of understanding that we would provide some housing for Cabrillo students. I think this was going to be downtown. We had some facility downtown where we did this. They wanted it to be official and signed by their board, so I agreed to come and visit the Cabrillo board. So I went to a board meeting, which again, to me, was just not a big deal. Of course, I was happy to do that. And we had this big signing. But to my surprise, they told me that this was the first time in living memory that a UCSC chancellor had come to a Cabrillo College board meeting. It really brought home to me that what I regarded as a normal thing to do, was to them a really big deal. So sometimes,

you just don't really know. It was part of my education to learn how people felt about such things.

The same thing happened with Watsonville. I think soon after I was appointed, Donna Blitzer²²⁰ and others arranged for me to go and spend a day in Watsonville. I had lunch with various city leaders. I think Hal Hyde was there.²²¹ I met with a bunch of people, and had a bunch of meetings, and then came home. I remember at the lunch, I was talking with the then-city manager of Watsonville, Carlos Palacios, who's now working for the county. At the lunch, Carlos said to me that he'd been around Watsonville for a long time, and he'd seen many chancellors who came to Watsonville once, and then they never see them again for the rest of their time as chancellor. So every time I've gone back to Watsonville—and it's been many times that I've gone to Watsonville—when Carlos was still there, I always reminded him of what he said. I have been back many times. I would like us to be doing more in Watsonville than we're currently doing, and we are exploring some things. That's a place that would welcome us with open arms. And I think that in terms of impact that we can have, Watsonville is a place where UCSC can have dramatic impact. I think it's a prime place to do something. I've been to Watsonville now as chancellor many times, probably not as often as I should. But we're talking twenty times, not once or twice.

Labor Issues

Another thing I had to do when I came in was to deal with a few of the positions in the chancellor's office—in this office there had been a significant turnover of people. Some of them had just been let go, even if they were long time university employees. I put my head together with Dave Kliger, and we agreed that this was not acceptable, that we had to find positions for the people who had been let go by Denice. So we actually did that. We found

positions for them. Some stayed in those positions. Some retired. We felt as though we had an obligation to repair that particular damage because Denice did go through a lot of people in certain positions. So we did that, basically, at least the ones we could find that hadn't been taken care of already. I think Dave had already done a few, even before I arrived, but I really wanted to finish that, even if it cost us money. It just felt like the right thing to do. So we had to do that.

And then there were some labor issues that came up almost immediately, which was interesting. One issue I've often cited as one of the biggest mistakes I've made as chancellor. Before I became acting chancellor, there was some demonstration by AFSCME somewhere. I don't know much of the details, or I don't remember much of the details. But some woman AFSCME member was arrested for assault, or for something. It wasn't just a minor trespass kind of thing. It was serious. The AFSCME union had made it a big issue that they wanted her released, etcetera, etcetera. So I had a discussion with various folks here on the second floor who suggested to me that as a gesture of goodwill and as an olive branch to the labor union, maybe I should write a letter to the district attorney, encouraging him, or urging him to drop charges against this particular woman. So I did that. I didn't know much about the incident. I didn't know much about anything. I thought this could be a gesture that would buy me some grace or something. (Reti laughs) I've told this story to a number of other chancellors over the years, just as a caution.

Well, what the district attorney did was eminently reasonable. He completely ignored my letter, which I think was the right thing for him to have done. And in terms of the goodwill that it bought me with the union, so far as I could tell, I saw no evidence of that. I think it bought me nothing. I did something that wasn't fundamentally principled and didn't reap a benefit from doing it. I don't think I did it for the right reasons and for whatever it's worth, it was something I regret having done. I've told that story because a number of

other chancellors have been faced with similar situations on their campuses. What they do is up to them. But for that reason, I have not again, ever, written to the district attorney even though urged to do that many times by many people. I think that I should keep my big nose out of the local jurisdiction of the district attorney.

The other labor issue that came up was that Denice had promised the labor unions that she would do a study of low-wage workers on campus, those with the lowest wages. That study was done. It was completed not long after I became acting chancellor. What came back was pretty concerning in terms of the number of people and in terms of how the wages were for some of the positions on campus. I'm not sure I even understand the entire systemwide context, but apparently a similar exercise had been done at Berkeley and at several other campuses, particularly Santa Barbara.

As a result of seeing the results of that analysis, my inclination was wanting to raise up the lowest-level salaries that we paid in Santa Cruz. It turns out that most of those workers in low-wage categories, but not everyone, was in a union. They weren't all unionized. For some reason which I can't completely explain (because I didn't understand labor policy at UC as well as I do today), it isn't something we could do today, but at the time individual campuses, if they wanted to, could do something different from the others to raise the salaries.

Reti: You mean individual campuses would have more flexibility.

Blumenthal: Individual campuses. That's right. Bob Birgeneau at Berkeley and I had a conversation. We each wanted to raise the lowest wages on our campuses. All we needed was permission from UCOP, and maybe the unions had to agree, I don't know. But how could they not agree? We're saying we'll give your people more money. So we put that into effect. I unilaterally raised the salaries of our lowest-wage workers on campus. It wasn't

just AFSCME. There were a couple of other unions, and there were several non-unionized labor people as well. Again, I don't think that that bought me a whole lot of credit in labor heaven, but I just felt as though it was the right thing to do. It was the principled thing to do.

Years later—even though I was soon excoriated, like all chancellors, by AFSCME—years later I met the head of the labor council for the state. I think we were both part of the Yudof-Gould report team. I was surprised when I was introduced to him. He said, “Oh, yes. I know of you. You're supposed to be pretty friendly toward labor.” I thought, how could he possibly think that, or know that. I suspect it was because he had heard about this salary increase. I don't know that for sure, but I do know that I thought this is an example of doing something that I felt was more principled. I wasn't looking for reward in heaven; I was looking to do the right thing. So that's another thing that I did.

Monterey Bay Education, Science, and Technology Center [MBEST]

Reti: So today is January 29, 2019. This is Irene Reti here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for the 21st session in our oral history. Today we're going to start by talking about MBEST [the Monterey Bay Education, Science, and Technology Center].²²²

Blumenthal: So MBEST. Just to set the stage a little bit, back, I'm not sure I even remember exactly when—I think it was when Karl Pister was chancellor—the federal government decided to get rid of Fort Ord from the military. So they basically went through a process and set up the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, FORA. Some of the land went to a variety of different entities, with the idea of doing economic development in Fort Ord. Of course, there were issues from day one, because there were buried bombs and stuff, and a lot, if not most, of the buildings were built by the military using materials that were unsafe by modern standards. For example, asbestos was a big issue. But having said all of

that, the University of California received a big chunk of land at Fort Ord, which became known as MBEST, the UC Center at the Monterey Bay.

Initially, I think, there was talk on campus of this being a satellite campus for UCSC. There was also talk about it being the next iteration of Silicon Valley, because Silicon Valley was booming and boomed a lot during M.R.C.'s time. The idea was they're running out of space in Silicon Valley, and therefore the logical expansion place was into Monterey. So Fort Ord would be a super place to interface with Silicon Valley companies. There could be housing, industry, universities—just this perfect combination of things working synergistically together.

That was the theory. The reality was that the dot com bust hit, so there never was any serious effort to expand Silicon Valley into Fort Ord. The Fort Ord Reuse Authority has spent many years trying to do development there, with mixed success. I think the most successful entity has been CSUMB, which established a campus there and I think has done a very creditable job in doing so. I would mark them as a success in this. There have been efforts to build housing there, to do more.

On the UC property, when I came in as acting chancellor, there were two buildings. There was an MBEST Center building, which was office space that had been built with some grant from the federal government. Then there was something called the flight building, which was a smaller building. It was more or less rented out by that point.

But there was great hope and expectation for all the stuff that UC could do there. I knew next to nothing about MBEST when I became acting chancellor. So one of the first things I did was to visit there. I met with Michael Houlemard,²²³ who was then the president of the Fort Ord Reuse Authority, and Michael still is. It turns out I'd known Michael a little bit when he was on campus. He had worked for Tom Vani at an earlier stage in his career.

I knew him very, very slightly. I really liked, and still continue to like Michael, and respect Michael very, very much. I think he's in an exceptionally difficult role.

It also soon became apparent to me that there was no good vision for what we were going to do there. Michael had some ideas; everybody seemed to have some ideas, but there was no clear pathway forward. And these were difficult economic times. I came in in 2006. We had recovered from the dot com bust, but we were two years away from the great recession. So the economic opportunity to do something was really remarkably minimal as well.

But the other thing that I was struck by when I first visited. There was a FORA board, a board of directors for FORA, and they had representatives from all the local communities. UCSC and CSUMB both had observers on the FORA board. We didn't have voting rights, which for me wasn't an issue, although it has always been one for CSUMB.

Anyway, what soon became apparent, just from my first FORA board meeting, was that this was a remarkably political place. The politics machinations weren't obvious. In Santa Cruz we have local politics, and I kind of understand it. You don't have to be a genius to understand the local politics here.

Reti: (laughs) True.

Blumenthal: Certain forces were at work in Monterey County, in a way that's really very different. Every different city there has its own political agenda. Some of the county supervisors have agendas that are very different from others. It's a much more complex, and in some ways difficult environment to operate in politically. I kind of got that, but didn't know much about it. My visit there was really just an introduction, but I came back and I met with Lora Martin. Lora Martin was then in charge of MBEST, and very committed to it. So we arranged for Lora to give me a presentation on what our options

are for MBEST. I was looking forward to it. I thought this could be a real opportunity. So we set up a two-hour meeting and I let Lora lead me through it. She talked about seven different options for how we can go, as though it was obvious I had to just pick one or two. On the other hand, from where I was sitting, these options were not university options. They were like: develop housing. Well, housing is nice, but we're not real estate developers. Develop some commercial space. When it was to develop something university-related, it was unclear to me if there was any need or market for what the university-related stuff was. So by the end of that meeting, and I saw no compelling pathway forward. It was just not at all obvious.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, I had a meeting with Congressman Sam Farr, kind of a courtesy meeting. He came up to campus. We had a very nice conversation and meeting. It was very positive. I learned something important from Sam Farr at that meeting, which is that when anyone takes your picture when you're wearing a suit, you always have to button your jacket button. There was this picture of him next to me. He carefully buttoned the suit button; I didn't even think about it. So when the picture came out, I look totally disheveled. These are the little tricks of the trade I guess you learn over time. (laughter)

So anyway, it was a very good meeting. I liked Sam a lot and I still like Sam a lot. And then the next thing I knew—and again, this was fairly early in my chancellorship—I got the most horrendous letter from Sam. I don't even think it was addressed to me. I think it was addressed to Bob Dynes, who was then the president. Basically, it was a horrendous letter in which he lambasts the university for not having followed up adequately on our MBEST property and for not having moved forward on plans to develop that property. Instead, he said we had not done anything with it yet, which was so contrary to the intent of the gift, etcetera, etcetera. It was a furious letter, just a furious letter. I believe it was directed at Dynes because he had no reason to be mad at me—yet at least. It was still way too early.

In fact later, when I did actually see him and ask him about it, he as much as said that to me, that it wasn't directed personally toward me, because I was too new. I didn't have any history there. But he was clearly growing frustrated with the lack of progress on the development of MBEST.

So I had some conversations with Bob Dynes about it and we agreed we would put together a group of external people to look at MBEST and make some suggestions about ways that we could most effectively move forward, and we agreed about who would be on that group. Ironically, I don't think it ever happened, at least at that time. It happened later, much later. I don't think that came about, because by then, Dynes was on his way out. He was supposed to play a major role in forming this group, but because he was leaving, that effort never got off the ground.

But as a part of Sam's kind of fit of anger, he also wrote to John Laird,²²⁴ who was then the state assembly representative from Santa Cruz, and he asked John to look into certain laws that govern the university and our use of federal lands. I don't remember exactly what, but he asked John to do a series of things. It wasn't even clear that John could do them if he wanted to. But the next time I was in Sacramento, I met and had lunch or dinner with John, who I'd known for years, even before I was chancellor. I remember John pulling out the letter and saying, "Can you tell me what the hell this means?" He said this in a way that only John could do, if you know what I mean. He was clearly really puzzled by all of this. So I tried to explain it to him and it was clear John wasn't going to take up any mantle on this one. He wasn't going to protect us, but he also wasn't going to do what Sam had asked him to do. He wasn't in a position to protect us.

Anyway, the MBEST story did not start well, from my perspective. I'm not sure it ever got to be a good story, but I'm going to pick this one up later. I'm trying at the moment to limit myself to things during the first year, when I was acting chancellor.

Transitioning from Paper to Electronic Media

When I came into this office, one of the first things I was shocked at was the amount of paper that crossed my desk. First of all, my assistant, Maurene [Catto]—and she'd been doing this for Denice, so it wasn't surprising—every day—literally, every day—she would create for me a binder, a three-ring binder, full of papers that were briefings on the meetings that I would have for the day.

Reti: Wow! And this is in 2006.

Blumenthal: Yes. I'd come in in the morning, and she would hand me the binder. Actually it may have been that she'd give it to me when I went home the night before, so that I could study it overnight because I was big on reading stuff before meetings. But I'd have this big binder with me at all times.

Then when I was sitting in my office, and I'd meet with people from around campus, they'd come and they would hand me these big, thick reports, or this big, thick study, or this big position paper. I thought about how completely ridiculous this was. First of all, I do lose things. I'm quite incapable of filing papers away and being able to find them again. I wanted them electronically.

So over a period of time I persuaded Maurene to switch our mode so that she did these binders, but they were electronic binders. I think we very quickly decided to use Dropbox, so she would put folders onto Dropbox. So wherever I was, even on my phone, I could just get in and read the files. That's literally a system that we've kept till today. You could just

as well use Google Drive today. But we were using Dropbox and that worked great. What was much more difficult was persuading other people to not hand me things, even within the administration. I felt like no matter how many times I told people don't, they'd walk in with a big bunch of stuff to distribute and give it to me. They'd kill all those trees to make those documents. Then I'd always ask them. "Do you have an electronic version of this that you can send to me?" Because that's all I wanted. I could read the electronic version on my laptop, or today on my iPad. It was as good, if not better, than having it on paper.

That change took forever. It took years to wean everybody from the use of paper, at least in my presence. That still happens occasionally. I admit to you that I do give my speeches off of paper, rather than using, say, an iPad. Some years ago Tracy Larrabee²²⁵ in engineering gave a graduation speech; I was watching her and she was using her iPad to give a graduation speech. It was outside and she was in the sun. Her iPad overheated and so she literally didn't have her speech. So I've always been intimidated about just using the iPad for a speech. I do use paper for that still.

Anyway, so for me, that was an important change in the office. I've taken a lot of pride in keeping this office as paper-free as it possibly can be. I'm trying to set an example for the campus. Now we're more or less paper-free as a campus. But boy, it was a struggle for years to convince people not to walk in here with a pile of paper to give me. That was a culture change, one that took some real perseverance. And it's so silly, because I really, really didn't want paper. I didn't regard this as doing something just for the environment. I prefer to have electronic files.

The Long Range Development Plan of 2005

All right. Now let's switch to the LRDP. So when I came in as acting chancellor, suddenly the LRDP took on a whole new perspective for me. The plan was in place to bring the LRDP to the regents in September, yet the Academic Senate had passed a resolution, which I had publicly supported, to *not* bring it to the regents until such time as the Senate Executive Committee felt comfortable approving that. So unbeknownst to me, I later heard this from Meredith Michaels, but unbeknownst to me at the time, people were taking bets on what I would do—whether I would push it despite the senate, or whether I would give the senate veto power over bringing it to the regents. I was kind of amused, because it was a no-brainer. How could I possibly—I mean, how could somebody with any integrity at all—

Reti: No. You would never do that.

Blumenthal: But in any event, the first thing I did when I came in was I went to members of the administration, largely Tom Vani and others, and said, “We have to become open on this in terms of the senate. They can have anything they want.” So over the next couple of months, there was this constant flow of information. They'd keep requesting stuff and people would say, “Is it okay to give them this?” I'd say, “It is okay to give them any and everything. Just give it to them. Don't ever put them in a position where they feel they're not getting the whole story.” So they kept giving them stuff over and over again.

Meanwhile, I had a few meetings with the city folks. I even had a meeting with CLUE, the Coalition to Limit University Expansion. They came to see me in my office and it was an interesting meeting. It was nice in the sense that we got to exchange our view of the world. But their message to me was really clear—that if I expected to be able to reach some

agreement with them to allow university expansion under any circumstances, that just wasn't going to happen.

With the city, it was clear what the issues were: traffic, water, and housing. I tried to do some work with them to try to see if there were ways to get this resolved in a mutually acceptable way, but we were way down the path of fights between the city and the university by then. Indeed, the city had put on its ballot Measures I and J, which limited water distribution to the campus to within the existing water boundary. Those did pass in the election, I think in June, which was a surprise to nobody. We ultimately sued and got the courts to throw out the election on the grounds that the city had not filed an EIR for these measures and had not done an environmental analysis. So then the city adopted them as legislation, rather than as a ballot measure.

Things were not going well with the city. At a certain point, I think Tom Vani suggested that what I might want to do, since the LRDP had come in at 21,000 students enrollment, that maybe if I lowered it to the environmentally preferred option of 19,500, maybe that would buy peace. I agreed to do that. I think that was a mistake. But I did agree to do it.

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: Because I was hoping it would bring peace.

Reti: No, no. Why do you think it was a mistake?

Blumenthal: Because I don't think there was any hope that it could have brought peace. I think we would have been better served had I just hung in there. I don't think it would have made a whit of difference in terms of the opposition. But I did it, in any event, in the vain hope that maybe we could find a way to work together. And of course, it's always a dumb idea to just make unilateral moves.

So, anyway, I did it. And it didn't ease things at all. So then, kind of the last day before we had a go/no-go decision about the regents agenda, the senate informed me that they felt it was okay to bring the LRDP to the regents meeting in September. So September was on.

And it was an interesting experience. All of the officials from the city of Santa Cruz and the county of Santa Cruz were there: Ryan Coonerty,²²⁶ Cynthia Mathews, I mean, the whole gang. I think they all testified at the public session about what a terrible thing this was. Then the time came when I had to present the item for the regents to certify the EIR for a long-range development plan. You have to understand, the long-range development plan is a huge document. I mean, it's a huge, huge document. There were people who just love documents like that. I met with Mardi Wormhoudt, who was then county supervisor, Mardi was then really angry at the university because we had put the LRDP up on the web and she wanted a hard copy. So I actually made them make a copy for her of the LRDP. (Reti laughs) It was multiple volumes. She got it and she was grateful and thanked me, and said she just spent many hours reading that document and enjoying the reading of that document. I never read that document. I mean, of course I had to approve it, which theoretically meant I should have read it all. But there was no way I could read that all and understand it all. Or stay awake through it all.²²⁷

Reti: So you're talking like what, 500 pages?

Blumenthal: Oh, if it was only 500 pages, that would have been doable. It was thousands and thousands.

Reti: Thousands. Okay because you know, the listener to this oral history's not going to be able see you waving your arms like that.

Blumenthal: Oh, thank you for the reminder. Yes, it's many, many thousands of pages, many volumes if you print it out. And much of it is very technical. Of course, I read the executive summary, which was probably one volume, in and of itself. And I was briefed on all of the issues that were in it. But I couldn't honestly tell you I sat down and read it, even though I had to sign off that I approved it.

But anyway, we were at the regents and made the presentation. My presentation was fine. I did whatever I was prepped to do. Then we opened it up for questions. The questions were really, really interesting. One set of questions came from Regent [Fred] Ruiz, who really took me to task for having lowered the number from 21,000 to 19,500.²²⁸ He made the point very clearly that the state of California and the regents of the university had invested in Santa Cruz and they deserved a return on that investment, and that it was unconscionable that I was lowering that estimate. He was going on and on about that.

I talked to him later after the meeting, because I knew Fred quite well. Fred and I were friendly, very friendly with each other. It turned out he did that to help me because in the audience were all the officials from Santa Cruz. So he was playing to that crowd.

Reti: Talk about a political arena.

Blumenthal: Exactly. Oh, and they were furious. I mean, the Santa Cruz folks were just—they just couldn't believe that I was attacked for having lowered this number. He was trying to basically send them a message by doing that.

Then Judy Hopkinson started asking questions. I knew as soon as Judy raised her hand that life would not be easy. I've seen Judy question people over many years and she reads everything. So Judy started. I remember she started off by saying, "I have four questions for you." And then she proceeded to list all four questions, which I don't like, because I'd rather people ask me questions sequentially because that means I have to write down the

questions as she goes through it. So she asked all four questions and they were very detailed, in some cases, about you know, page 1632, footnote 2, in this document. She asked her four questions.

I was completely flustered because one of them I just plain didn't understand. And so I said, "Well, let me answer your questions. The answer to your first question is blah, blah, blah." I said, "The answer to your second question is blah, blah, blah." I said, "Let's skip the third question for the moment, and for the fourth question, the answer is blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." (Reti laughs) Then I said to her, "But I have to tell you, Regent Hopkinson, I don't understand your third question." I really didn't understand it. And she got a very disgusted look on her face. She opened the document to the appropriate page and she read me a quote. And she said, "I don't understand." The quote she read was how the number of employees on the expanded campus would scale with enrollment. She said she didn't understand why if you double the number of people on campus, you don't double the number of employees.

Once she explained the question to me, I was feeling much better about it. My answer was, "Oh," I said, "Well, if you double the number of students, I would expect we would double the number of faculty. But that doesn't mean we double the number of staff. There are positions on campus that you don't increase as you increase the population of students. For example, the campus only needs one chancellor. You double the campus size; you don't suddenly need two chancellors. So that's why the total number of employees would increase less rapidly than the student body." I felt very relieved that I even understood her question, much less knew how to answer it.

And so the LRDP was approved strongly by the regents. I think it was unanimous, but I don't remember that for a fact. I do remember talking afterwards to Cynthia and others

from the city. They were livid. They were angry at the regents because they felt that their concerns were dismissed, which largely, they were. But that was the LRDP. The LRDP went through. Of course, it was going to face lawsuits, which we knew, and we'll come back to.

Reti: George, I don't think we've discussed the constitutional autonomy of UC very much.

Blumenthal: So let's back up a little bit. The University of California Regents derive their authority from Article 9, Section 9, of the state constitution. That article specifies that the regents of UC are a constitutionally established branch of state government. They are not subject to the authority of the legislature or the governor. They really are like a fourth branch of government. Yes, they're appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate, but they can pretty much do what they want. Now that's subject to some practical constraints. For example, there're no printing presses to make money within the regents.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So the regents are dependent on the state allocating money, and the state can choose to allocate or not allocate, or to specify how money should be spent. But the state doesn't have the authority to tell the university how to do its business, and in many instances, the university could, if it chose, not actually follow state law.

Reti: Do you know why it was that things were set up that way?

Blumenthal: Yeah. It was, in a sense, to protect the independence of the university and the independence of inquiry. It's notable that this was done for UC, but not CSU. I think a lot of that had to do with the research mission of UC, that UC needed to be able to do its

inquiries, and needed to do its business in a way that wasn't subject to the changes associated with state government and state politics.

Having authority is great, or autonomy is great. But if you exercise it too much, you may lose it entirely. So the trick is to use it at the important points, when it's of fundamental importance to the organization or the institution, rather than to try to wield it like a sword at all opportunities. So the regents rarely employ constitutional autonomy, but they do occasionally.

And so, for example, oftentimes the legislature will pass laws. So for example, some of the first laws on sexual harassment training, I think probably had language like, "We mandate that all the community colleges and the CSU enact mandatory sexual harassment training on their campuses. And we encourage the regents to do the same." So typically laws on higher education will use language like that.

So the regents do follow the law. But because they have this quasi-independence, they really don't care particularly about local authority. I mean, they should care. And nowadays I think they do care a lot more. But in principle, they can ignore local authority.

Reti: All right. Thank you.

Blumenthal: Sure. And again, this is an issue we will have to come back to.

Reti: Oh, I am sure. (laughs) Yes.

Blumenthal: Several times. That's all I was going to say about the LRDP right now.

Founders Day

Okay, moving right along. Founders Day. When M.R.C. was chancellor, she instituted something called the Scholarship Benefit Dinner, which the campus did for a number of

years when she was chancellor, and which we continued into my chancellorship, until we stopped doing it. Let me just say a little bit about that first. I think the Scholarship Benefit Dinner was a great idea, and generated a lot of enthusiasm in Santa Cruz. In fact, I attended a number of them. M.R.C. invited me, as senate chair, to attend these, although I was convinced somebody always seated me next to the most boring person in the room. But that doesn't matter. I do remember attending those. I even attended when Denice was chancellor. I think it was a great tradition and we did continue it for a number of years into my chancellorship. Eventually we moved it to Silicon Valley for a while. But at the end of the day, it never turned out to be that big a money-making experience for the campus. From a purely investment point of view, it really wasn't a great payoff and it took a lot of energy for people to do it. I think University Relations had an issue for a long time about doing all of the events that they do, and doing them right.

I added an event to their calendar: Founders Day. The way that got started was when I was the new vice-chair of the systemwide senate and went up there, Maria Bertero-Barceló, who was then the executive director, told me that as the vice chair and chair of the senate, I would be invited to a lot of events around the UC system. She said, "The only event that you need to do, but you should definitely do it, is Founders Day at UC San Francisco. It's inspiring, you'll love it, and that's the one event you should go to without fail." So I said great, I'll do it.

So my first year up there, when I was vice chair, I happened to be traveling the day of Founders Day. I don't remember where I was, but there was no way I could do it. So I let that go. Then the next year, I was again invited and arranged with Kelly that we were going to go. Then there was a hotel strike in San Francisco. The Ritz was one of the hotels being struck, and they were holding it at the Ritz. So it was canceled. I figured oh well, what the hell, you pays your money and you takes your chances. Too bad.

I'd had a really good relationship with the senate office at UCSF. I'd done some stuff for them, and they were very grateful. So they made a point of inviting Kelly and me to attend the next year, even though I was no longer in office. So we went up to San Francisco. It was an event at the Ritz Hotel. It was a black tie event, tuxedos. I was thunderstruck by it. It was the most amazing event I had ever seen. It had Mike Bishop,²²⁹ the chancellor, up on the stage most of the evening. They gave a bunch of awards to world-famous people. They gave a foundation medal to people who had accomplished amazing things in life. They gave awards to their faculty. They gave awards to people who'd given them a lot of money. It was so celebratory of what UCSF is. I don't see how you could possibly go to that event and not feel really good about UC San Francisco. I was thunderstruck by it, dazzled by it, as was Kelly.

When I got back, I called University Relations. I was encouraging them to do something like that at Santa Cruz. I said, "It will really make a difference. It's such a feel-good experience." It got no response. I think they thought this was just one more crazy faculty member with an unusual idea.

Reti: So this was before you were chancellor.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Well, lo and behold, some months later, suddenly I was the acting chancellor. So I went to University Relations and I told them that they were about to have Founders Day in San Francisco again, and they should send somebody up there to check it out. So they did. They sent some people up there. They came back and they said to me, "You know, I don't care what you say, Chancellor, I think we've got to do this." (laughter) So we started Founders Day and we did it for many years at the Coconut Grove downtown. And we made it again for many years (although we backed off on that a few years ago), a black tie event. We made a decision not to make it a money-making event. The idea was

to charge enough to cover most of our expenses. But it was intended to be a feel-good event about the campus. So we did it. For many years we used it as a vehicle to give the Faculty Research Award, the Outstanding Alumni award, the Foundation medal and the Fiat Lux award.

After the first one of these we did, which was a great success, I remember Kelly telling me that after the dinner, Quentin Williams came over to her almost with tears in his eyes saying that was the best event he'd ever been at UC Santa Cruz. And Quentin's a pretty hard guy. He doesn't get all that emotional that much. But I was so impressed. If Quentin was impressed, then it had to have been a really good event. So we've kept it going. We've done it every year. It's been tough because we've moved it to various different venues now on campus with not quite the aura of the Coconut Grove.

Reti: Why didn't it stay at the Coconut Grove?

Blumenthal: I don't think Coconut Grove does this anymore. And there aren't really good venues in Santa Cruz. One year, the fiftieth anniversary year, we did it in a humongous tent on the East Field. That was a great success. Then we did it in the Science Library one year. I think for two years now we've done it at Porter College. It isn't quite the event that it once was. We've certainly backed off from black tie, which is a very un-Santa Cruzian thing. (Reti laughs) But there's something to be said for dressing up occasionally in black ties. But it's overall been a great success. I'm not sure how long it will continue after I'm gone. I have certainly an emotional attachment to it, but I don't think it's quite the event it used to be. I think the venue is part of the issue. But we'll see. I think the campus does need its signature events and I was particularly proud of this one because I was so inspired by San Francisco. So that's the origin of Founders Day.

Council of Chancellors

So part of being chancellor is attending meetings of the Council of Chancellors. The chancellors meet together every month and it's an all-day meeting, basically, and we discuss the issues of the day. After I was appointed acting chancellor, I remember getting ready for my first Council of Chancellors meeting. First of all, I was shocked by the agenda because I was used to the Academic Senate. A typical senate Council agenda would be at least a hundred pages long, and Maria would organize it with all the agenda items, with clear labels of what's an action item, what's a discussion item, and then all of the possible background that you could ever want to read about it. So it took a long time to get through reading all of the agenda for the Academic Council.

But for the Council of Chancellors meeting, they would simply distribute one sheet of paper, half filled with a few topics that were going to be discussed. That was all we would ever get. I think in those days, they might have even sent it down on paper, faxed it over to us.

By the way, in the Office of the President, I was just shocked. When I became chancellor, and the Office of the President communicated with the chancellors, important material was communicated via fax, not email.

Reti: Wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So we'd get these faxes. I thought it was the stupidest thing in the world, because we don't even have a fax machine in this office here. Our fax machine is over there somewhere, I think in Jesse's office now, but it used to be even further away in in the Xerox room.

Reti: That's not very confidential, at the least.

Blumenthal: Yes, it's not very confidential. I kept pointing that out to people. So finally they started sending emails to Maurene [Catto], and then to Margaret [McGuire], saying, "Go stand by your fax machine, because a confidential fax is coming." (Reti laughs)

In fact, the irony of it is that I quickly developed a standard practice for the office. I insisted that whenever a fax came in for me, that the first thing they had to do was scan it and then email it to me. Because again, (A), I don't like seeing things on paper. And (B), who knows, if I was traveling or something? So I just wanted it as a standard practice that all faxes got emailed to me. It just struck me as so stupid—you use a computer to generate a document, then you scan it to create a paper version, and then you fax it. And then at the other end, they take that fax and they scan it to make it an electronic document again. It was nuts, but for years they did that.

Anyway, I got this one sheet of paper with a set of topics. I wasn't totally shocked, because I had seen a few agendas when I was chair of the senate. I think Denice had shown me her agenda. Marty Chemers had showed me the agenda a few times.

So I went up there. I was really nervous. I was saying to myself, I have ascended Mount Olympus. Here I am, poor little old George, I'm now going to be rubbing shoulders with the elite of academia. These are the chancellors of the University of California campuses. We're going to be discussing the most momentous of issues in higher education. I'd been to the Academic Council and I'd been on the regents, but this felt like it was a whole new level. I had to be prepped for it. When I drove up there and I played the theme from *Rocky* on my CD in my car to prepare myself psychologically.

Reti: (laughs) I love it!

Blumenthal: I was just trying to get psyched up for this.

Reti: That's great. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So I got up there and we had the meeting. And it was a really awful meeting. We sat around the table and people were complaining about the press, because this was the middle of Compensation Gate.

Reti: Oh, it was still during that period.

Blumenthal: Everybody was whining about it. We got very little real work done. Very little of substance done at that meeting. It was really pretty bad. I was so disappointed. I walked out with Michael Drake, who was the chancellor at Irvine. Michael and I are friends. We already were pretty good friends. I said to him, "Michael, this was awful. This was one of the worst meetings I've ever been to."

Michael smiled and he said, "Well, that was one of the best CoC meetings we've had in months." (laughs) I think he was pulling my leg, but still. It was clear that I hadn't really climbed Mount Olympus.

I believed that I was not likely to become the permanent chancellor. I mentioned the conversation I'd had with Dynes about that. But more than that, it was simple math. I figured that (A), I didn't know from day one that I wanted to even try for permanent chancellor. It wasn't clear to me I'd like this job. And (B), even if I liked it, I knew they were doing a nationwide search. At the best, I could assume that I would be interviewed. I might have a one chance in six of being chosen as the chancellor. That's kind of how I ranked my chances: a 16 percent chance to be chancellor. That means most likely not. So I figured, look, I enjoyed being senate chair for a year. I'll enjoy being acting chancellor for a year. I'm going to damn well enjoy it, and do what I think I want to do. I'm not going to worry about whether or not it will position me for the chancellor position.

One of the things I decided to do from the beginning was be very outspoken. So during that year, I'd say that 90 percent of all comments by chancellors at the CoC meeting were either by me, or by Bob Birgeneau, then the chancellor at Berkeley. We were usually disagreeing with each other, which is kind of interesting, because he's also a physicist, so we have a pretty solid basis of agreement, as is Bob Dynes. I'd say we contributed 90 percent of the chancellorial comments.

I just was out-there. Issues came up that were really tough issues, and some of them were quite contentious. There was an issue about admissions. Bob was going on and on about how he had the authority to do admissions policy on his campus. I was saying "No, it's the senate that has that authority." It went back and forth. He kept saying, "I consulted with my campus council." I said, "I don't care whether you consulted with your campus council, the regents' bylaws trump everything." So we'd argue. Dynes would rarely intervene to end these arguments. Dynes was very close to Birgeneau. I knew that they were in the same field of physics. They were both condensed matter physicists, experimental physicists, so they had a lot in common. But I didn't care. I just did what I had to do.

One of the biggest and most horrifying issues that came up had to do with the pension for Howard Hughes fellows. So let me explain that. When a faculty member becomes a Howard Hughes fellow, they cease to be paid by the university, but are instead paid by the Howard Hughes Foundation. So Hughes does not funnel its money through the university; it just pays them separately. They even have a separate kind of pension system during that period, some kind of defined contribution plan. We on our campus at the time I think had only one Hughes fellow: David Haussler.²³⁰ I think there had been one earlier, but this person had left. But Berkeley had quite a number, and San Francisco had quite a number. And the question had arisen from some of the senior Howard Hughes fellows at

Berkeley about whether or not the years that they were Hughes fellows should count toward their UC pension.

Reti: So this is kind of similar to the issue with the doctors at UCSF?

Blumenthal: A little bit different than the doctors. The doctors at UCSF—there was never any question that they were eligible for UC pension based upon their state salary. But it was the additional non-state salary they earned and whether that would contribute was the issue.

Reti: So this was totally different, because this was the entire salary.

Blumenthal: It was the entire salary. And yet they were on our campuses—they were teaching, they were supervising students, getting other grants, etcetera. So they were acting like regular faculty members in all ways, but they weren't being paid by the university and they weren't accruing credit, including years of credit, toward their pension.

There was first a debate about whether or not these complaints were valid and whether the Hughes fellows were being disadvantaged. I know the Academic Senate, the systemwide senate, did some analysis, and weren't very sympathetic, but they weren't all that unsympathetic, either. I thought the issue of whether or not the complaints were valid or not was iffy from my looking at it. I felt as though these were some of our most eminent and productive faculty, and if you're ever going to go out of your way for somebody, you may as well do it for your most eminent and productive faculty. It seemed to me like a slam dunk that we really should do it for them, even though I'm not sure the case was as strong as some people would have argued at the time. I thought the senate had some good points. But given that we were going to do it, then the question was how.

So we had this meeting of the Council of Chancellors where Birgeneau said, “This is easy. Some of our faculty have been contributing to the pension system for years, and then they became Howard Hughes fellows. But if you just figure out how much they’ve contributed over the years and you figure out what the interest is on their contributions, etcetera, that accrued interest is so large that we should just include them and not have to pay anything for it. It should just be automatically included as a matter of policy.”

I said, “No, you can’t do that. We’re a defined benefit plan, not a defined contribution plan.” Once we include even a single Howard Hughes fellow in our defined benefit plan, that’s an increased liability and therefore it decreases the value of the plan, and it should cost the amount that the plan has decreased in value in order to add that fellow.

We got into this huge argument at CoC (Council of Chancellors) between Birgeneau and me about this. It was so frustrating to me because first of all, he wasn’t hearing me. I kept saying to him, “Your calculation is absolutely correct and absolutely irrelevant.” He just wasn’t hearing me. Then he appealed to Bob Dynes. And Dynes basically said, “Well, I think you’re making a very good point,” to Birgeneau, which just infuriated me, because I really thought Dynes had to know better. The other chancellors weren’t contributing to the discussion. It was literally an afternoon of Birgeneau and me going after each other over this issue about whether there should be a campus tax to pay for adding these people to the pension system. It was so obvious to me that I was right. In fairness to Michael, Michael Drake did say a few things at one point that I interpreted as being supportive of my position. But nobody really jumped in and decisively said anything. The discussion finally petered out, and we moved onto the next item. I was somewhat furious. I mean, I can be wrong, but this was not one I was wrong on, and I was sure of it.

So, anyway, I moved on. A month went by. Next month I showed up at the Council of Chancellors meeting and I saw outside the room were the two actuaries for the University of California system. They're the regents' actuaries. They're consultants. I saw Bruce Darling as he was entering. I pulled him aside and said, "Bruce, what are the actuaries doing here?" Bruce said, "Well we have to finish the discussion of the Howard Hughes fellows and the pension system and come to some conclusion." I said, "Well, are you saying that you disagree with what I was saying at the last meeting?" He said, "No, no. You were absolutely right. It was obvious you were right. But we needed to bring these people here to convince Birgeneau."

Reti: I was kind of wondering that. It seemed that somebody who has custody of that system needs to stand up and say this is a violation of this kind of retirement system.

Blumenthal: Yes, exactly. So what Bruce said annoyed me because Bruce was basically saying that to him it was obvious I was right.

Reti: But he never said anything.

Blumenthal: But he never said anything.

Reti: (laughs) He just let you be out there by yourself.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I felt—I'm the acting chancellor; I'm the newbie on the block. I'm the guy who's not going to be there for long. And I'm fighting this case.

Reti: Do you think that there was a climate of fear? Or were people just checked out?

Blumenthal: I think the dynamics of those meetings was that a lot of people just didn't talk much. Birgeneau did. He was not shy about expressing his views. So he tended to dominate a lot of the discussions. Then when I came in, the dynamics changed a little bit.

Reti: So it was more personalities.

Blumenthal: It was more personalities. Idiosyncratic. I would never say today I dominate CoC meetings. I think most of the chancellors contribute and we all contribute about equally. Today there is a much better balance.

So they brought in the actuaries, and the actuaries presented all these fancy models and how it's all done. Ultimately, they basically said what I said: "You have to value the plan, add the person, and then revalue it and figure out the difference. And that's what it should cost." They gave this long presentation, at the end of which Birgeneau basically said, "I still don't agree with that point of view, but I know when I'm outnumbered." (laughter) So that's what we did.

Another issue that came up, which for me was a really important one, had to do with faculty salaries. Faculty salaries had lagged well behind our comparison institutions, as they are today. Times were tough, so there wasn't a lot of movement to rectify that situation. But I think everyone recognized how serious this was. Also, the university had already gotten to a state, and it only got worse over time, that the campuses were acting much more independently.

So, a little bit of context. Back in the '70s and '80s, all of the campuses had, as they still have, the same base salary scales as each other. However, how people progressed through those scales, and whether or not they had off-scale amounts added to their base salaries depended on their campus. In the old days, significant (or even any) off-scale salaries were either discouraged or not allowed. So if you were a professor step five at Berkeley, you got the same amount as a professor step five at San Diego or Santa Cruz, or wherever. Presumably, the criteria to get to step five was the same on the campuses, at least in theory. But over the years, because we've been so far behind in salaries, the campuses

have used off-scale salaries as a way of making up the salary differential between ourselves and our comparators and competitors. The campuses have all done this differently. Some campuses, particularly Berkeley and UCLA, have been much more generous in terms of their off-scales, in order to recruit and retain faculty. Campuses like Davis and Santa Cruz, for example, were using off-scale salaries much less because we didn't have the resources. So the campuses developed differences already in how we pay our faculty, even though in theory, the system is one system.

During Dynes' presidency it seemed clear to me we had gotten to a point where we needed to do something. The regents had passed RC61A, which was a regents item saying that they wanted to raise all salaries for UC faculty and staff up to market value within a decade. And by the way, interestingly enough, a decade later, several of us marked that decade's passing, noting that salaries had not increased relative to our comparators.

Reti: So I wanted to ask you, what is the reason that the University of California lags behind other comparable institutions to begin with?

Blumenthal: That's a great question. Why do we lag behind other comparable institutions? The answer's a complex one. Officially, the California Post-Secondary Education Commission, adopted eight comparator universities within the United States. Of those eight, four are public universities and four are private universities. If you compare UC to the four public universities among our comparators—I think the University of Illinois, I'm not sure what they are, but Illinois, I think, was one of them—our salaries are above our public comparators. But if you compare us to our private comparators, we're way behind and these are the institutions with whom we compete for faculty members. So it's a perfectly legitimate comparison. I think that yes, we're ahead

of the other publics, but not by much. And yes, we're behind the privates, and that's by a lot.

Reti: Okay. And when you compare us to the other publics, does the cost of living in California factor in that?

Blumenthal: That doesn't include the cost of living, which of course is another strain.

Reti: I mean, it's variable, of course: Merced versus Santa Cruz.

Blumenthal: Merced and Davis are the only campuses where the cost of living is relatively low compared to coastal campuses. Maybe Riverside. Most of UC is in expensive territory, so that's a huge competitive disadvantage.

So it was clear to me that we needed to do something, but it wasn't clear that there would be motivation on the part of the UC to do it. But what happened is, one day the CSU system reached a grand agreement with their faculty union—and they are unionized—on a series of salary increases over the next four years that were clearly going to be way in excess of anything that UC was likely to do.

That news came out on a Wednesday morning. I remember I got to the Council of Chancellors early and there was Bob Dynes and Larry Hershman, who was the vice president of budget, talking about this and hatching a plan to do something about it. I remember thinking, how interesting and ironic it is that they're only having this discussion because they realize that there's no way they can be intransigent in the face of what had happened at CSU—that the UC faculty would never stand for inaction.

So there was an agreement that there would be a four-year plan at UC and it was brought to the Council of Chancellors for discussion. It was very, very contentious, a lot of disagreement. On the one hand were people like me, who wanted to see our salary system

come to greater uniformity across the campuses and who wanted to restore the good old days where salary scales actually meant something. Then there were others who could argue quite legitimately that they had solved some of the problems of salary and equity on their campus using off-scale salaries, and why should big bad UCOP step in and force them to do something that they didn't want to do? And why should they lose their autonomy to deal with their salary problems? Not an illegitimate argument.

But the argument was quite intense. I ended up supporting a plan by which we would for two years raise the salary scales. By raising just the salary scales, we swept up people who were off-scale. That is to say, it brought more and more people onto scale. And then with the idea that the last two years, we would do across-the-board increases. So people, whether they were off-scale or on-scale, would get the same percentage. That was the plan that I was supporting. Most of the others simply supported an across-the-board increase. It got to be very contentious.

San Diego argued—this had to be Marye Anne Fox—argued that San Diego had all of these non-performing associate professors who had tenure, who would be there forever, but who never did any work, or any research, and therefore would never even be promoted to full professor. But now under this proposal to increase the scales, they would have an inducement to stay on as long as possible before they retired, because the longer they stayed, the higher their salary, and therefore the higher their pension would be. But they were non-performing faculty.

Interestingly enough, although that claim was made, when the Academic Senate actually did a study of the campuses to see how many non-performing associate professors there were, the number was a handful across the system. It is true that San Diego had more

than anyone else, but we're talking about four instead of two or something. Not a big problem, and not the kind of thing you make major policy decisions over.

So anyway, at the end of the day, after a lot of arguing, the only two chancellors who supported the plan of doing two years of raising the salary scale were me and Bob Gray, who was then the acting chancellor at Riverside. We were the only two supported that. But we won because the then provost of the university, Rory Hume, got ten votes. (laughter) He very strongly felt that that was the appropriate thing to do, so that's what it was decided to do.

Reti: Interesting that the only two supporters were acting chancellors, and of the least powerful campuses in the system.

Blumenthal: Exactly. Ironically, we only did the increases for a year because then the great recession hit, so we abandoned the salary increase.

The issue has come up now. It's like déjà vu all over again. Recently we've been facing the same issue again, and many of the same arguments have come up again.

Reti: Okay. So we'll revisit that.

Blumenthal: It's very interesting, isn't it?

Faculty Salary Scales at UC Santa Cruz

So meanwhile, back at the ranch, in Santa Cruz, I was facing the issue of the salary scale on campus. The faculty here had done a study of the UC Santa Cruz faculty salaries compared to the other UC campuses. And it was quite clear from that study—which I think Barry Bowman²³¹ was a key part of—that we were below the system, bringing up the rear of the UC system in terms of our faculty salaries. This was an important issue for me to

try to deal with when I arrived. On the one hand, I had to acknowledge the existence of this gap and its fundamental unfairness. But then the question is, what do we do about it? There was some discussion at several senate meetings. Ultimately, what the senate proposed that we do is that we give an across-the-board increase to all faculty on campus, to bring them up to a more reasonable level, whatever that might be.

Reti: I'm going to ask you another one of my annoying why questions.

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: Because I think someone listening to this would probably wonder: why was Santa Cruz so far behind the other campuses?

Blumenthal: That's a great question. In fact, I was going to come to that in a minute. But let me address the why now. Why was Santa Cruz so far behind? In fact, I think it was the dynamics of Santa Cruz. I think that it wasn't the mean administration over many years refusing to give pay increases, because basically the administration was pretty much giving what the Senate Committee on Academic Personnel was proposing for increases. It was the fact that, not only was the administration being hard on faculty, but it was the fact that the senate was being hard on us, the faculty, at the same time with an unwillingness to open the banks and to really consider off-scale as a major contributor to faculty salaries.

Reti: So do you think that the funding was there?

Blumenthal: We were clearly one of the poorest campuses, so we couldn't afford it no matter what we did. So, yeah, the issue of affordability was certainly playing into this, because as we'll discuss later, by any reasonable measure, we were underfunded relative to the other campuses. We definitely didn't have free money to play games with. So the

money wasn't there. But the point is, our academic personnel processes, including the recommendations of the departments and of CAP, were playing into this. It wasn't just the administration making mean or cheap decisions. And like I said, I had nothing to do with it. But I think there's a tendency for the campus to be penurious with salaries. I'm not sure whether I told the following story or not, but I'll tell it now.

In astronomy, certainly in the early years that I was here, for much of the early years I was here, astronomy had the reputation of being the most penurious department on campus. Our faculty didn't get huge increases in salaries. It was very hard to get tenure. Tenure was usually granted at the last possible minute. Joe Wampler, who was a world-famous instrumentalist, got tenure at the last possible moment that he could ever have gotten it. The same is true of Joe Miller. These were people who had made major contributions in astronomy. I think Sandy Faber and I were the first group of people who got tenure early.

When I became chair of astronomy, I was aware of that and I was aware of the fact that astronomy didn't advance people up the salary scales very fast. So when I had my first meeting to discuss personnel reviews of the faculty, I did something very interesting. I got a list of all of the astronomy faculty in the UC system and what their rank, step, and salary was. I put this information up on the blackboard, just so everyone could see it. When people came into the room for our faculty meeting, there it was in front of them. Of course, it was a shock because the first thing they did is they compared themselves to the other people in the UC system. Astronomy's a small field. Everybody knew everybody else in the system. So they'd look at these names, and say, wait a minute, I'm better than so and so, and look how much higher up the chain than—

Reti: Painful.

Blumenthal: It was painful. But my intention was to convey to the department that we were being too hard on ourselves, and that no change would happen unless we tried to take a more reasoned approach relative to the other campuses, and be cognizant of what other campuses are doing as we considered proposing our own people for increases in salary.

I think it made a big difference because it started a major change in astronomy. For a while, astronomy over-corrected and we started pushing people too fast, which was better than not fast enough. But it's just a tendency people can get into. Yes, astronomy was doing it, but I think the campus was doing it, too.

But it's also true there wasn't enough money to do a whole lot more in any event, which was the dilemma I faced coming in as chancellor, because I felt we had to do something. So the senate proposal was that I agree to give just an across-the-board increase to everyone on campus some amount that would bring our salaries here closer to the UC system average. I refused to do that. I wouldn't do that because I felt it was our merit review system that had gotten us into this mess; I thought it had to be the merit review system that got us out of the mess.

So we had a bunch of discussions about what to do. And it was also clear to me I couldn't solve this problem in one day, or in one year. This would have to be a long-term solution. So what we finally did is we put in place a salary plan which continued for eight or nine years, where when a faculty member got an accelerated increase in step, we automatically tacked on an extra half step of salary. That way we were particularly rewarding the most productive faculty and we were adding to off-scales, which the campus desperately needed us to be doing. We did it based upon a criteria that was somewhat predictable in terms of

the total cost. And we did it in a way that if we could keep this up for an extended period of time, it would actually allow us to catch up to other campuses.

So we set a goal. Our goal was to achieve the median salary across the UC system, excluding Berkeley and UCLA because they're so much richer than we are. But we wanted to hit the median of the other campuses. It took us a few years. We finally passed Davis. Then a few years after that, we got to the median. We achieved that goal.

Now today, when the senate looks at faculty salaries in Santa Cruz, they're still not happy because by certain other criteria, which we can look at, we still haven't achieved what they want to do. They object to leaving out Berkeley and UCLA as well. We can have those discussions, but I would argue that we thought about it hard, we set a goal for ourselves and we achieved that goal. I think we made distinct progress. But this is always a sensitive issue.

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: That's something I had control over. What I didn't have control over was staff salaries. And as I think you're well aware, for many years, I don't remember the exact number, like six, seven years, there was no staff salary increase.

Reti: Yes, I do remember. (laughs)

Blumenthal: These are tough issues.

Reti: Yeah. And you didn't have any control over that because of the unions, or—

Blumenthal: Well, first of all, there's the unions, which represent half of all the staff. But even for the non-represented staff, the policy on how much increase in salary there should be on the campuses was set by the president.

Reti: Ah, I see. Right. So you wouldn't have, as chancellor, been able to create any kind of a plan, like you did for faculty.

Blumenthal: Right. And again, it's getting ahead of ourselves, but when ultimately we had the opportunity to provide advancements on campus, for a number of years we had some freedom in terms of how to do that. Some campuses came up with some very complicated formulas for how to increase staff salaries. I was very simple-minded. My view was that it had been so many years since staff had had salary increases, I thought the only fair thing to do was across the board, just to try to start to make up for lost time. That prevented us from having to make hard decisions about who was deserving and who wasn't. Everybody was needing. So that's what I did. But most campuses didn't go that way. And as I understand it, at many of those other campuses, there was some real anger and concern among the staff. But that's not my problem. My problem was Santa Cruz. Salary issues are tough issues. UC has still not managed to solve them. I'm not sure we're in a whole lot better position today than we've been before.

So, not much more to say about the Council of Chancellors meetings. The social dynamics were interesting. I remember the first time I walked in and sat down, I decided to sit in a different location than I sat when I was on the president's cabinet. It turned out I had sat in Denice's seat. The chancellors are very conservative and always sit in the same seats. (Reti laughs) So I sat next to Henry Yang, which was kind of nice, because I like Henry. And we'd often exchange comments, although Henry has a tendency to lean over and ask me some questions about what's going on. Background stuff. Which is a little distracting when you're there. But you know, again, the dynamics were such that I tried to be open to having a real discussion of issues. But when the president's mind was made up, it was usually made up.

Reti: So is the purpose of the Council of Chancellors advisory?

Blumenthal: Yeah. The president really does have the authority, and we derive our authority from him or her. But most presidents have tried to achieve consensus. But a president who kind of ruled without getting consensus from the chancellors would not, in the long run, be very stable.

Reti: Does it also serve in some way as a kind of support amongst chancellors? I would think it can be kind of lonely at the top.

Blumenthal: Yes, it does. We do support each other. Chancellors frequently talk to each other off-cycle, or in other ways. It's an interesting question you ask because until a couple of years ago, I was shocked that the chancellors never met themselves without the president there. Never. Not once. The first time that happened was two or three years ago when I organized a meeting of the chancellors. After that, we followed that with another, with a breakfast. And then we had another meeting. Now it's become institutionalized that we meet together for breakfast on the day of the Council of Chancellors, before the meeting, without the president there. I think the reason we institutionalized it, that it finally happened regularly, was largely because of SurveyGate and what was at the time a major disconnect between the president, in this case President Napolitano, and the chancellors. There was certainly a feeling on the part of the chancellors that the disconnect was very real.

Reti: SurveyGate.

Blumenthal: Yeah. The state auditor survey, which we'll talk about later.

But in any event, at least during Dynes' times, I think they were good meetings. Dynes ran good meetings. Michael Drake occasionally spoke up at these meetings, but most

chancellors were relatively quiet. Larry Vanderhoef, occasionally. But rarely, if ever, did Henry say anything at these meetings. I don't remember France Cordova saying much. Most of the chancellors were relatively quiet. Marye Anne Fox rarely spoke. So that's why I said it was Birgeneau and me, by a large measure. I had opinions on almost everything. (Reti laughs) But in fairness to him, and to me as well, we represented the extremes of different viewpoints. I represented a young campus, a newer campus trying to establish itself, struggling to get the resources we need. Birgeneau represented a campus that was well established. It was the lead campus for the system. To some extent, Birgeneau always gave off the image that he thought about the hierarchy of UC in such a way that the president of UC actually sat somewhere below the chancellor of Berkeley. You can imagine that he and I would often see things in different light.

Reti: Yes, indeed.

Donor Relations

Blumenthal: So one of the other jobs that I was doing as chancellor was meeting with donors. That was something of a new experience for me. It was helped by some of our key donors. One, in particular, was Jack Baskin²³² and Peggy Baskin.²³³ And that was really good. Jack is such a nice guy, and I really enjoyed talking with him, and he was so committed to the university. And Peggy took a real liking to Kelly from day one. I think there was a real connection between the two of them. It was really a pleasure to work with Jack and Peggy. Of course, I did occasionally make asks of Jack, but working with him made getting into that world a lot easier.

I also want to call out Anne [Neufeld] Levin,²³⁴ who was then on the foundation board. Anne later fell on some more difficult times before she passed away. But Anne was very welcoming to me, and certainly made me feel more comfortable in this role as chancellor

having to work with donors to the campus. Those two in particular, I think, really eased that for me.

Of course, I met regularly with the foundation board. They were all well-meaning people, very committed to Santa Cruz, but they weren't really a board dedicated to philanthropy. That troubled me. We had a few members of the board who were more philanthropic, and some who were just kind of treating it as the next stage after the alumni council. I soon realized that this was going to have to be changed over time. One of the things I tried to accomplish as chancellor was to professionalize the foundation board, which I think we've done to a significant extent, but not to the extent that I think is needed. I think a lot more work needs to be done, but we made progress.

But I do remember meeting with them. I remember being very nervous. I felt like a fish out of water, meeting with the foundation board. But they were very welcoming and very supportive. I couldn't have asked for more in terms of support from the foundation board.

Reti: Now I realize we're just talking about the year that you're acting chancellor at this point. But during that year, were there fundraising goals that you remember?

Blumenthal: No. The campus was raising less than twenty million dollars a year. The only goal that arose quickly, came from Anu[radha] Luther [Maitra],²³⁵ who was the president of the foundation. Anu felt that even though she might not have the money to give to really make a huge, humongous difference, she thought that what the campus needed—and she was absolutely right—was more endowed chairs. So she set a goal to raise money for several endowed chairs. I think that year we raised four endowed chairs for the campus. In fairness to Anu, that was really her vision at that point, although I adopted it and made that one of my primary goals through all of our fundraising over the years.

One of the things I'm most proud of is doubling the number of endowed chairs. To put it into perspective, when I became acting chancellor, we had fewer endowed chairs than UC Merced had the day it opened. We really had not made a major deal out of getting endowed chairs. We might have had eighteen or nineteen, I don't remember exactly. So doubling the number of endowed chairs was a big deal. I was chancellor for maybe, I don't know, a quarter of the history of the campus, but I doubled the number of endowed chairs. It was Anu who sent me down that path. I really want to credit her for that.

Goals and Agenda as Acting Chancellor: UCSC's Budget Issues

One of the things that chancellors did, and still do, is meet with the president. The president does have an oversight role for the campus. Dynes did an annual evaluation of the chancellors. We had to submit something to him, and he would look it over, and we would have a conversation. It was kind of pro forma. But in addition to all of that, Dynes cycled through all of the campuses, and would meet with one chancellor each month.

Soon after I arrived, there was a regularly scheduled meeting with the chancellor of Santa Cruz. So this was my meeting. I was very naïve. I didn't know how to do it. So the first thing I wanted to find out, which we found out from the Office of the President, was what the other chancellors do. When Dynes was president, he let the chancellor set the agenda for the meeting. Some people came by themselves; some brought their EVC; some brought several vice chancellors; and several chancellors brought large contingents with them for the meeting with the president. So it was all over the map, what people did.

The question was: what do I do? So I went to Larry Hershman, who I knew quite well, and asked him what he thought, because Larry was going to be present at these meetings. Larry was very clear. He said, "Oh, well, you should bring Meredith Michaels, and the two of you should just do it."

So I went to Meredith, and Meredith basically said no, I should go alone and just do it myself. She said, “You understand the issues well enough. You don’t need me. And probably having one person presenting the case for the campus would be much more powerful than having a retinue, or even two people.” So that was her advice. I decided to take Meredith’s advice.

Now I need to back up for a second and give you a little bit of background. I hadn’t just been idle before this meeting. And it wasn’t so much in preparation for the meeting, but in preparation for being chancellor, or acting chancellor, there’s a lot of stuff I had to learn about the campus. Even though I knew a lot, there was a lot I didn’t know. One of the key people to bring me up to speed was going to be Meredith. What I really wanted to understand was the budget. I wanted to understand what the money situation looked like, what was squirreled away, what wasn’t. We had reserves. How were the reserves kept? There was a lot of obscurity there because the campus had different reserves squirreled away in different ways. It was complicated. I needed to understand it all.

So I had a lot of meetings with Meredith near the beginning to try to walk me through those things. The two of us soon realized that it was more difficult than either of us had imagined, because we thought so differently. Meredith was much more the traditional budget-type person. So when Meredith talks about the budgets of units or the campus, she would present a spreadsheet. If she wanted to talk about how the budget would change if you did this or change if you did that, she would simply do different columns in a spreadsheet to show it. I’m not the kind of person who looks at spreadsheets. I like to think more algebraically or symbolically. Is there an equation here that describes how things change? If there’s an equation, then I can think about it much more analytically.

Reti: You are interested in what’s behind the spreadsheet.

Blumenthal: Yes, what's behind the spreadsheet. So I struggled for a number of meetings to translate Meredith's analyses into a format that I could internalize. I felt as though I could take it much further if I understood it in that way. That just wasn't the way Meredith thought about things. So we struggled communicating with each other for a while and eventually we figured it out. I, at least got to the point where I could understand it both ways: her way and my way. But it took a while to get there. This was not easy. It was a significant investment of time on my part. But I'm one of those people who likes to understand stuff and I felt it was my obligation as chancellor to have a deep understanding of budgetary things, and really frankly, to have a deep understanding of almost anything that goes on. I can't understand everything, but certainly things that I'm interested in, or think are important, I should deeply understand.

So we invested a fair amount of time in the early weeks of my acting chancellorship, to educating me on the budget. Meredith knew what I knew. She knew how much or how little I knew. And emanating from that, at one point, at a cabinet meeting, I raised the issue with Meredith—I didn't intend to embarrass her in public, it was just followed from an issue that was being discussed—that I wanted to know how many state dollars we get per student, and how that compares with the other campuses.

And her answer, which she gave immediately, stunned me. Her answer was that she couldn't answer that question because UCOP would not release the data to the campuses to answer that question. In other words, we would get our budget from UCOP; we would know how much money we got and we knew how many students we had. But they would never give us the information for the other campuses, so there was no way to do intercampus comparison.

I was shocked. It seemed to me this was the least transparent thing I'd ever heard about the University of California. She kept assuring me that that they did that and that Larry was so smart that he would never allow numbers like the ones that I was asking for to be calculated because once you calculate them, then they're subject to public records request.

Reti: But each of the campuses had that information in terms of how much money they were getting per student. So wouldn't the Council of Chancellors been able to sit around and figure that out?

Blumenthal: Yeah, if we sat around and figured out stuff together.

Reti: Okay. (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was also clear, again—midway through my acting chancellor year, we had some discussions of budgetary issues. I was dumbstruck by the fact that, while we discussed budgetary issues at the Council of Chancellors, I understood this stuff much better than any other chancellor. I remember, I went into some long explanation of something and at the end of it, Marye Anne Fox said, "George, could you please repeat that explanation? I didn't quite get it all. Could you just do it again?" And I remember thinking oh my God, is it possible that they don't understand this more deeply than me? It was scary. Yes, I am analytical and yes, I am maybe a little bit fanatical about wanting to understand things, but I was surprised that I appeared to have certainly one of the more sophisticated understandings of the budget.

Anyway, so I was just dumbstruck by Meredith's comment that she couldn't get me that information. And she knew that. So a week passed and she came to see me. She said, "Look, here's what I did. One of my folks hacked into the computer at the Office of the President."

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I'm joking. That was a joke. She didn't really say that.

Reti: Okay. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But she did say that one of her folks had legal access to the computers at UCOP, budget computers, because they have to do exchanges of information. And he had downloaded some data. It took some analysis of the data, but he had generated a table of the sort that I wanted, which was state dollars per students at the various UC campuses. And here it is. She also said, "I wasn't sure we had done this right, so I told Larry [Hershman] what I had done. His reaction was, 'You can't possibly get all the numbers correct.'" But she showed him what they had done and he said, "You know, that's pretty accurate."

So she showed me the results. The key takeaway was that Santa Cruz was way below the UC average in terms of dollars per student. Not the lowest. I think the lowest was Santa Barbara. Or maybe it was Irvine. I can't remember anymore. But the point is, we were way below the UC average. We're talking about 40 percent below the UC average. Not a dollar or two. That was a lot. Of course, Berkeley was above the UC average. San Francisco was probably the highest, because they had a lot of dollars and very few students. But UCLA was also very, very high.

Anyway, so there I had it. I had the data and I kind of knew what one of my agenda items was going to be at my meeting with the president.

Reti: You weren't starting small, were you? (laughs)

Blumenthal: Oh, no. My first meeting was a big one. I had four major issues that I raised at that meeting. I'll go through them. But the key thing was the decision to go alone. I felt

as though Meredith was right, that if I brought anyone with me, while I don't like to ask other people to shut up or anything, I really felt that I wanted to get through *my* agenda and get these issues out on the table. The only way to do that efficiently was to be alone.

Larry wasn't there at that meeting. I think that is when he left, retired. Larry retired suddenly. Or maybe he wasn't there because of whatever. But he wasn't. And Joe Mullinix, who had been the vice president for business affairs, was gone. They had just hired a brand-new CFO, chief financial officer, for the university, called Katie Lapp,²³⁶ who at the time I didn't know at all, although I really grew to like Katie. She was there, and some of the other budget people were there, and the other senior vice presidents were there. Rory Hume was there. Bruce Darling was there. So there was quite a contingent from the Office of the President, and me. And of course, the president.

I raised four issues. The first issue was transparency. I told the story of not being able to get the data, dollars per student, and how inappropriate that was since I thought that was just not the way that the Office of the President should operate. The campuses deserve to know how they compared to the other campuses. Etcetera, etcetera. I mean, it's easy to wax eloquent on issues like that where the status quo is impossible to defend. It's such an obvious thing. And at that point Larry, I think, had left. He had been avoiding transparency. He kept things in his head. And there was always what was called the Hershman factor. He'd figure stuff out, and then make a few adjustments to meet equity. But still, it would be better to know what was really going on.

Katie was very, very open to that. In fact, she said she wanted to make the system more open. She was committed to it. She promised me that this would happen. She said, "I would be happy to work with you to make it happen." And in fact, over the next few weeks, Katie called me several times to talk about issues of transparency and how they could do

better. She really had followed up. She didn't waste time. Things got much better. Today, it's no big deal. We now automatically get the data on all of the other campuses. It would be unthinkable to do otherwise.

Reti: Oh, good. I'm glad to hear that. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But to me, it was unthinkable that they weren't doing that from the get-go.

Reti: Yes, I'm amazed.

Blumenthal: So transparency was a big issue.

Rebenching

The next big issue was one that I now use the shorthand for: rebenching. But at the time, I'm sure I didn't know that term. It had to do with the distribution of state dollars to the campuses that I mentioned a few minutes ago—in particular, how it was non-uniform. So I brought in Meredith's table and I brought in all the background data that they had used to construct that table. It was really funny. As soon as I put it on the table and started discussing it, the first thing Bob Dynes said was, "Oh, I've never seen anything like that before." I'm thinking oh my God, he's the president. Wouldn't that be one of the first things I'd want to know: how state dollars are spent among the campuses?

And then Rory Hume, who was the provost, sort of grabbed this package, I had a package; the top sheet was the results, the table. But behind it were all the calculations. So he's poring through the calculations, trying to figure out how we did the calculations. I remember saying to him he was welcome to have that, I wouldn't swear to it to the last dollar, but the trend was definitely right.

So I basically made the case: Bob Dynes had argued we were one university. If we were one university, we should have one funding model, and Santa Cruz should be funded on the same level of state funding as any other university within the system. To do otherwise intrinsically sets up a hierarchy that could never be undone. I made the case very eloquently. Everybody agreed they would think about it. Of course, nothing happened as a result of that. You understand, this was a radical perspective that I was bringing forth. I was essentially saying there needed to be redistribution of resources within UC. I told you, I was going to have an impact if I was going to be acting chancellor.

Reti: Right. You were like, if it's one year, it's one year.

Blumenthal: So that was issue number two. I will come back and discuss rebenching at some length later.

The third issue had to do with tuition. And again, this was an issue I got from Meredith, and was kind of shocked by. Our students pay tuition. I've always assumed that the tuition went to the university. But in fact, what happens is when our students pay tuition, at least in those days, the tuition went to the Office of the President, which then distributed it back to the campuses. But the Office of the President felt under no obligation to distribute tuition income back to the campus from which it was generated. And in fact, they distributed it in a very different way, so that at the end of the day, in Santa Cruz, we were getting back about 67 cents on the dollar for every dollar our students paid in tuition. I've taken out return-to-aid. None of this is about returned aid. Take out all the returned aid stuff first. It is from the residual tuition, after subtracting return-to-aid, that we got back 67 cents on the dollar. .

Reti: Return-to-aid?

Blumenthal: When you pay tuition to UC, a third of it, 33 percent, goes into a separate pool, which is used for financial support.

Reti: Financial aid.

Blumenthal: Financial aid. So the remaining two-thirds goes into a pot and is distributed back to the campuses. And of that remaining two-thirds, we got back two-thirds of the money that was contributed by our students. Our students pay for their education. I felt that as they pay more, they should get more. The Office of the President argued that no, the only reason we do tuition increases is because the state doesn't increase state support, the state has fallen short of their state support obligations, and therefore we should distribute the tuition money in the same way that we distribute state support money.

Reti: Basically, they get you twice.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Replicate the inequity.

Blumenthal: Yes. They replicate the inequity. But that was their theory. And from their perspective, it made a certain amount of sense. Maybe they felt there was no inequity. If there were no inequity, maybe it would make sense.

I think that it's something that our students pay for and should get the benefit of. So I also raised the issue of a more equitable return of tuition dollars. That was the third issue that I had raised. This was a portentous meeting.

Dark Fiber and Internet Service

The fourth issue was about dark fiber. So one day I was visited by Brad Smith, and the guy who was then the vice-provost of IT. They wanted to talk about dark fiber for the campus. I didn't even know what dark fiber was. I'd never even heard of it. They explained to me very carefully that dark fiber was one way to get the Internet to campuses, and that what made dark fiber so special was not only its high capacity for carrying information, but the fact that you could reserve certain frequencies, or a certain amount of bandwidth, for a given project, so that you could have certain reserved spots, and know that you would get that full bandwidth no matter what other users are doing.

Reti: I see. That would certainly have implications for the kind of research that they were doing.

Blumenthal: It would have implications for our research. We have the genome browser; we had things that required high capacity Internet connectivity. The astronomers needed it for their digital image data from the telescopes. You name it, there were lots of reasons why we needed dark fiber. I didn't even know what it was, but that didn't stop them from convincing me that this was important.

So, well, it turned out that some years earlier, the university had made a decision to extend dark fiber to all of the UC campuses, but they forgot Santa Cruz.

Reti: Oh my God. (laughs) There's a theme here.

Blumenthal: I am not kidding you.

Reti: They forgot Santa Cruz?

Blumenthal: They forgot Santa Cruz. All of the other campuses had dark fiber paid for by the Office of the President, but Santa Cruz had none. And there was no effort being made to get us dark fiber. So I raised that issue.

Somebody at that meeting who'd been around a long time—I can't remember who it was—had no recollection. They said, "Wait a minute, we did that for Santa Cruz years ago, because we had done it for the other campuses years ago."

I remember saying, "No. I think I would know if you had done it for Santa Cruz, and you haven't. We fell through the cracks. But you've done it for every other campus in UC and I'm making the case that you need to do it for Santa Cruz, too."

Dynes is a physicist, but he was completely confused. He said, "Well, what's the issue?" He said, "Does your Internet slow too much when too many people are using the Internet?" I said, "No, that's not it. This is a whole new technology that is state of the art and that any campus actively engaged in research really does need to have. And that's why the UC system decided to give it to all the campuses."

So we discussed it for a while. Finally I was getting a little frustrated because this seemed like such a no-brainer. I turned to Bob Dynes and I said, "Look, Bob. You love telling the world that you believe in the power and promise of ten, that ten campuses acting collectively can do so much more. If you don't give us dark fiber, then I think you need to change it to the power and promise of 9.5 because we will be doing our work with one arm tied behind our back." The argument carried the day. They agreed at that meeting that they would get us dark fiber, which turned out to be expensive. I think it ended up costing five to ten million dollars. There were various ways that they thought about doing it, but at the end of the day they had to put it on telephone poles over the Santa Cruz Mountains from Silicon Valley. But they did it. It took some years to get finished, though, but it did

happen. A few years after that, we were successful on a grant proposal and we got a second line of dark fiber into Santa Cruz from the south, I think from Salinas. So we now have two distinct connections through dark fiber, so if one goes out, we still have the other.

Reti: Right. I would think telephone poles are rather vulnerable in the storms.

Blumenthal: Right. So we got it, and it worked. But it was kind of funny because nobody knew what I was talking about.

Reti: Well, it was quite an auspicious beginning.

Blumenthal: Yeah. It was quite a meeting, because I was just determined to do it. I was so grateful to Meredith, because by telling me to go it alone, she put the pressure on me. I was trying to respond to that pressure to do it, and to do it right.

Larry Hershman

Reti: This is Irene Reti and today is January 30, 2019. This is our twenty-second interview. I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal in his office and we are continuing with talking about your time as acting chancellor.

Blumenthal: Great. Thanks, Irene. I think we've covered most of the acting chancellor period. There was a brief thing which happened around that time, so I thought I'd mention that. That has to do with the retirement of Larry Hershman, the vice president of budget. That was really, really sad. Hershman had been the vice president for budget for many, many years, and before that, he had been at UCSF for many, many years. So he had like forty-some years in the UC system. Larry was very smart, very well meaning. You know, not the most transparent person in the world by any means. But nobody would question how well-meaning he was, and how much he tried to work on behalf of the whole

UC system. And Hershman, I thought worked very well with the legislature. They honored him a lot in Sacramento when he retired.

But his departure from UC was less than ideal. At a certain point, the regents started giving Hershman trouble about the budget presentations that he did. Bob Dynes was still president and I suspect some of that had to do with their anger towards Dynes. But there were a couple of meetings where regents accused Hershman of not being transparent with them, of not presenting them the material that they needed in order to approve the UC budget and approve our requests to the legislature. This had been going on for a couple of months. He was getting angrier and angrier. And at one meeting they told him to his face, right in the middle of a regents meeting, “You didn’t give us the information you should have at our last meeting, on such and such budget stuff.”

Larry was furious. I saw him when he left. He was steaming. He was really, really angry, and so he didn’t come to the Thursday session of the regents. There was no reason for him to. I think I knew he was staying home.

But during the public comment portion of the meeting on Thursday an interesting thing happened. On every day of a regents meeting, they begin with public comment, usually twenty to thirty minutes, and each of the public commenters gets, typically, one to two minutes to say their spiel before the regents. There are always some standard people who show up at every single regents meeting, and one of them was a person who’s a union person from San Francisco. I think she was either in CUE or the head of CUE, which was a union in San Francisco. And she typically wore a t-shirt that said, “Impeach the Regents.”

On that Thursday morning she got up and in her public comment, she basically said, “I heard you yesterday telling Vice President Hershman that he didn’t present the

appropriate budget information to you at the previous regents meeting. I've got to tell you regents, I was there. I was there for his presentation. I listened to it. He presented to you exactly what you said he hadn't done. It was all there. This is ridiculous. I can't believe you're attacking Vice President Hershman for something that he actually did do."

Reti: Wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Then she stopped and she paused and said, very dramatically, "And I can't believe I'm standing up here defending Vice President Hershman."

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: I was so amused by that. I left the meeting and I called Larry Hershman at home. I had his home number because I wanted him to hear this. And it was kind of disappointing because he was still so angry that although he found it amusing, it just didn't alleviate the pain that he was feeling. And shortly thereafter, he simply retired. To his credit, Bob Dynes decided to award Larry the UC Presidential Medal, whatever it's called. They don't do that very often. But he gave it to Hershman, and there was a big ceremony at Berkeley when they did that. I think that was appropriate and I think it was good. I was glad for Larry that he got that. I still believe Larry was a very, very good servant for UC and it saddened me tremendously to see the way he departed UC. It just isn't right; didn't strike me as the right thing.

"There was so much going on every single day":

Adapting to the Acting Chancellor Position

Next I wanted to give you a few impressions of the job that I had when I stepped in as acting chancellor. When I arrived, I really, really didn't know what to expect. I didn't know whether I'd like it here; I didn't know whether I would hate it. I had no idea. I just thought

it would be interesting. I think the first thing that came through to me was how it was exciting. There was so much going on every single day, from the very beginning to the end. I remember telling Maurene [Catto], who was then my administrative assistant, that she was welcome to schedule me for anything, and she could do whatever she wanted, but I started at nine o'clock. I didn't start at eight o'clock. And pretty much we've kept that over the years, with exceptions.

But what I soon realized was I was just getting exhausted every day because I was scheduled up. I'd come in at nine and I would have solid events and meetings throughout the day. Typically, I went home around six, unless there was an event in the evening, in which case I'd stay for that. It was absolutely overwhelming. I realized that this was not sustainable, even for a year. So I asked Maurene to always schedule desk time during the day. That was time that nobody else could see as being available on my calendar. I looked busy, so that people didn't feel they could fill in that time. We would schedule it for an emergency or for something urgent. But I describe it as time to put my feet up on my desk and stare at the ceiling and try to think more strategically about what's going on. Otherwise, you just get caught in the moment. I give that advice to everybody who asks for advice about taking on a role within the university. The advice is to give themselves some time to contemplate.

Reti: That's great to have on the record.

Blumenthal: To me, that's really, really important, being able to think about things.

There was one other lesson that I learned—and it took me surprisingly little time to learn it, but I would not have predicted that I'd absorb that lesson so easily. Before I was senate chair, when I had something happen to me during the day that I was emotionally attached to in any way—and I was emotionally attached to a lot of things—you know, if I was happy

about it or if I was upset about it, I just wouldn't let go of it all day. I mean, I would think about it all day. If I were lucky, by the next day I could be a little bit more objective and not let it dominate my thoughts. But if I met with somebody and I was upset by it, I would stay upset. That was just who I was.

But I quickly adapted, realizing that in this position, holding on to your thoughts from a previous meeting was just not possible. If I had ten meetings in a day, and if I had emotional attachments to issues on all ten, or even on two or three of those ten meetings, there was no way I could be effective in the next meeting if I was still lingering in the past. So one skill I really did develop was the ability to let go of the last thing that happened.

Reti: So how did you do that?

Blumenthal: I wish I could tell you the answer. It's a good question: how did I do that. I honestly don't know. It was just force of will and a realization that the job that I'm doing is so important that I have to concentrate on the matter at hand.

Reti: Were there things that would keep you awake in the middle of the night?

Blumenthal: That's a good question: what were there things that kept me awake at night? Yeah, there were issues that kept me awake, but I tend to stay up late, anyway. And I tend before I go to bed to do things to distract myself. I don't usually go to bed worrying about something. If I am worried about something when I go to bed, it *will* keep me from sleeping, or I might think about it when I wake up. But at night, I'm pretty good about compartmentalizing my life.

But no, it was during the day that this was really important because I had so many things going on. And then, of course, keeping them all straight; there was no way I could organize all of the follow-ups I had to do on all of the issues. Without Ashish here, I would have let

so many things fall through the cracks. I'm just not that good at keeping organized. So I was struck by that as well.

But I was also struck by the fact that the group here, and frankly, the whole campus, was remarkably accepting of me. I was surprised; I was shocked by that. I wondered whether or not people would resent that I wasn't Marty Chemers. I wondered whether the fact that I didn't have administrative experience would be something that would cause people to be worried. Or the fact that I was a scientist might be something that some parts of campus would be leery of. I can think of lots of reasons why I wouldn't be so well accepted from day one in this position. It was quite astonishing to me how accepted I was. People in town, politicians, community members—everyone was so very, very nice to me. That was pretty heartwarming, but it was also true.

I think in part, people were looking for someone they could feel good about being in the position. So in a way, it was a self-determined thing, a self-fulfilling prophecy. But nevertheless, I felt very, very welcomed in this role by virtually every constituency.

Reti: Some people have described you as UCSC's first homegrown chancellor because, as far as I know, you're the first one to come from within the campus.

Blumenthal: Well, Marty Chemers came from within the campus.

Reti: True. As acting chancellor. So this would be more relevant to perhaps later when you became permanent. But I wondered how much you think the fact that people did know you already, and that they felt a sense of pride in the campus having produced someone who's a leader, who was familiar, was a factor in your acceptance? You had not just been here; you had been here for decades.

Blumenthal: I'm sure that played a role, but the question is, how well known was I really on the campus and in the community? The main campus role that I had played was chair of the senate. So the *faculty* should have known me fairly well. But I'm not sure how widely known I was on campus, for example, among staff. In the community, yes, I knew a few people. I knew Cynthia [Mathews] and John Laird. I knew a few people, but I really didn't know that many people in the community. And because we had moved to Los Gatos some years earlier, I didn't really have continuing roots right here. I had lived in Santa Cruz for many years, but I hadn't been a resident for some years by that point.

So I think it was the *idea* of me, more than me, if you know what I mean, that was a positive. But people wanted to be very friendly. I think that that's something about the community in which we live. I'm hoping that they'll feel the same way toward whomever's the next chancellor as well. But anyway, I certainly felt accepted. I also felt accepted by the senior management group, which was an interesting mixed bag because there were people here on this floor, or in this senior management group, that I knew well. I knew the continuing deans. We had two new deans coming in just as I was appointed. Sheldon Kamieniecki²³⁷ and George Van Den Abbeele.²³⁸ As soon as my appointment was announced, I called both of them up, because they hadn't arrived yet. I know Sheldon and I joked about it for many years, that for Sheldon, that was an important call. I kind of did it as a courtesy, but Sheldon was really concerned. He had just agreed to come to UCSC to be the dean and all of a sudden, the old chancellor's out, and there's a new chancellor, who he had no idea about. So for him it was humanizing that I called him and chatted with him for a few minutes.

In terms of the senior management group that was already here, I knew a lot of them, but there were some that I didn't know very well, or didn't know at all. I didn't really know Donna Murphy,²³⁹ for example, who was then the vice chancellor of university relations.

And there were a few others that I knew just kind of to nod at, but not really well at all. I was concerned a little bit, because the vice chancellor of student affairs at the time was Francisco Hernandez.²⁴⁰ I wasn't sure about Francisco. In some ways I thought he had done exactly what M.R.C. Greenwood had asked of him and really done a good job of trying to engage and keep students from rising up against her. But on the other hand, he was a very closed person, a very cards-close-to-his-vest kind of guy and I wasn't sure if that was going to fit the kind of leadership style that I was looking for here. It turned out my concerns were irrelevant, because Francisco had known that Denice Denton was not thrilled with him, so he had applied for other jobs. So almost immediately after I became acting chancellor, he told me that he was leaving to go to the University of Hawaii. That had all started long before I was on the scene.

But again, I was pleasantly surprised at how accepting everyone was, not the least of which was Dave Kliger. Dave had been the dean of PB Sci for many years. I was one of his faculty. When I became chair, I served for six years as a chair under Dave. He was my boss. Now we found ourselves in this interesting situation where we were role reversed. It didn't bother me at all, but I could easily imagine that for some people it could have bothered them. Dave never showed any indication that that was of concern. Dave taught me a lot. Dave was an administrator par excellence. He was well experienced and knew what he was doing. He was very good at what he did and he complemented me in terms of his skillset because I really didn't have that managerial skillset at that point. I would have floundered if I had had to do all that he was doing. Dave was really special. I honestly believe that Dave is one of the unsung heroes of the campus. If we step back and think about what Dave did after he was appointed EVC and Denice was chancellor, it was clear that Dave was doing most of the work of the chancellor, in addition to the work of the EVC, and he was doing it without complaining. He got stuff done. Even though I had some

criticisms of how the LRDP was handled, nevertheless he did it while he was EVC, basically work that the chancellor should have been doing.

Reti: I did an oral history with him and he's very modest. He never really talked about that, at all.

Blumenthal: That doesn't surprise me. That's who he is. He is a very modest guy. But that doesn't detract from the fact that he made those contributions and he did those things. For everything that I knew about that he did during that year—and I learned a lot about it after the fact, after I came in as chancellor—there's probably ten things that I didn't ever hear about. Dave deserves an enormous amount of credit and a medal for his contributions to the campus during a very, very trying period.

And then I started working with Ashish. That was a pleasure. Ashish [Sahni] was a great complement and alter ego to me. I loved using him as a sounding board. I had told him that I'd look for him to disagree with me, tell me when he thought I was wrong. It took him a while. I mean literally, for a couple of years, every time he disagreed with me, he wanted to remind me that I said it was okay. (Reti laughs) But of course, I understand. He's a staff member and doesn't have tenure. I get that. But he was and continues to be an enormous help to me. What Ashish did was not only keep me organized, but Ashish has often served the role of the bad guy in the administration. There have been innumerable times when we had to say no or something like that to somebody. Ashish would take that on to save me from having to do it myself, so I could preserve my Mr. Nice Guy Image. And that, by its very nature, gave Ashish a Mr. Mean Guy image sometimes. But he really was serving the campus when he did that.

Reti: Did you move into University House, or stay in your house over the hill?

Blumenthal: That's a good question and it's a complicated question. When I was acting chancellor, I wasn't even permitted to stay in University House. I never questioned it. I know that some acting chancellors have been allowed to stay in University House. But it was never offered to me and I had the impression I wasn't allowed to do it. I used University House only for entertainment. But I did use it for entertainment. I used it a lot. A couple of issues came up very quickly. One issue was that Denice had hung an original painting by Picasso in University House. It was there when I came in as acting chancellor. And I was very, very nervous. I didn't feel comfortable leaving it at University House, so I had them pack it up. There's a special way you pack up fancy paintings. Then we had to figure out where the hell to leave it because we had to leave it in a place that was reasonably safe. So we finally settled on Ashish's office. So in the corner of Ashish's office—

Reti: (laughs) What a nightmare, to house a Picasso in your office.

Blumenthal: But in a crate. It was crated up. You had no idea what it was from the appearance of the crate. It was just this wood *thing*. So it was there in Ashish's office and it actually stayed in Ashish's office for literally years. It may have been there for five years. So what happened was that after Denice died, the question, there were some questions raised about her estate. This painting was one of the issues. And it was an issue between Denice's family, particularly her mother, and Denise's former partner, Gretchen Kalonji.²⁴¹ And while the painting seemed to be owned by Denice, Gretchen claimed that she had paid for half of the painting, and therefore had a half ownership in the painting. This wasn't something for us to decide, but we kept the painting until someone told us what to do with it.

So there developed this fight over the painting, and this court case, which dragged on for a long, long time. And you know, I kept asking the Office of General Counsel what the hell I should do with this painting. And they didn't ever give me any advice to do something with it, so we kept it in Ashish's office. So it was in Ashish's office through all the demonstrations. It was in Ashish's office through the occupation of Kerr Hall. (laughs) The occupiers never made it into this part of the building, by the way. So it was an interesting situation.

Finally, the case was resolved. We kept waiting for some legal notice from somebody to hand over the painting, and we never got it. Finally, I persuaded the Office of General Counsel to reach out to the mother's lawyers, and only then did they kind of tell us what they wanted us to do with the painting. We finally sent it to them. It was crazy. I didn't want us involved in this in any way. So that was the painting.

One of the very first events I had at University House—I had a lot of events there—was a lunch for some visiting—I can't remember whether they were Korean or Chinese or Japanese officials—I think they were from an embassy. It was a lunch and it was one of the first lunches that I did there. I remember I was waiting for them to arrive at University House. Jeff Rockwell²⁴² was there. We were all there waiting near the door. And then they arrive, and literally as they're walking up the sidewalk to the front door to the University House, Jeff Rockwell realizes that the painting that's on the wall next to the door appeared to show a person of Chinese descent being throttled from behind, or choked from behind. It was kind of abstract, but that's what it looked like. He literally realized it at the moment. He mentioned it to me. I was kind of horrified. So Jeff, ever—

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no.

Blumenthal: —thinking about these things, just as these officials were walking in the door, Jeff just, as I was greeting them, Jeff stood in front of the painting.

Reti: This is like a bad TV drama. (laughs)

Blumenthal: It looked like a comedy routine. Jeff stood in front of the painting until they were all inside and then he surreptitiously took the painting off the wall and stored it somewhere. But at that point I realized the danger of artwork. I can't imagine what Denice was thinking to put that there.

Reti: Gosh. Just stick with Ansel Adams. You're a lot safer. (laughter)²⁴³

Blumenthal: Exactly. But that was the artwork at the University House.

As I said, I probably entertained two or three times a week at University House, I didn't live there. I think maybe once or twice I may have slept in the guest bedroom because some event was late at night and I had an early morning. But it wasn't until I was appointed chancellor that I had the right to occupy the house. And then it became very awkward because Dynes actively wanted the chancellor to live in the house. It is regents' policy that they do so. I realized this was going to pose some dilemma for me, because our house was in Monte Sereno; Kelly teaches in San Francisco. I did want to be with my wife.

Reti: Right, and you would be asking her to commute from Santa Cruz to San Francisco.

Blumenthal: That's right. So we decided to do what I think was very sensible. We bought some furniture for the house. We literally furnished the private quarters with our own furniture. I did stay there sometimes and Kelly stayed there sometimes. But I would admit to you that I probably stayed at University House maybe once a month, twice a month, something of that order; it was not very often that I would sleep over. But it was furnished with our stuff. I could call it my home. Where I actually put my head on a pillow at night,

it seemed to me, was nobody's business but mine. It wasn't the regents' business, either. But since it was my furniture, it was my home.

But we didn't get to that situation so easily because when I was later appointed chancellor, Kelly and I went into the living quarters, the family quarters. And how can I say this? Kelly was not happy. The rooms had been painted very dark colors, like almost black. They'd brought in some shutters—dark brown shutters. Everything was dark and painted almost black, except for one room, which was painted bright red. We called it the bordello room. So we did this thing with Bob Sinsheimer, which I've already talked about earlier, where we took him and his wife, Bob and Karen, through the private quarters. That confirmed to me that Kelly wasn't crazy. I mean, I didn't think Kelly was crazy. But you have to understand, I'll live almost anywhere. I don't much care. But I'm pretty much in the extreme. And Kelly definitely did care. I don't think she cared to an unusual extent, but she certainly did care. Then we were told that we couldn't have it repainted and redone, and we couldn't get new shutters because this had all been done a year ago when Denice moved in. There was some rule that you had to wait two years before you could repaint a place like that.

So I actually, in one of my conversations with Bob Dynes, raised the issue with him. I said, "I think I need your permission to repaint and to redo the interior. It's really a very, very simple point. I've been married for thirty years, and I want to make it to thirty-one." (laughs) He could sympathize with that. So I got permission and we repainted it and put in some new shutters that were white.

Reti: I'm glad to hear that. It sounds pretty extreme.

Blumenthal: So that was the basic story on University House. I'll come back to some University House issues later on.

Reti: Okay. It may be that you want to talk about this later. But I just wondered, in relation to Kelly and your family, this first year, what kinds of changes and impact your new position had on them?

Blumenthal: You mean as acting chancellor?

Reti: Yeah, as acting chancellor. Or if you want to fold that into a more general discussion, we could do that, too.

Blumenthal: Well, Aaron was in college. Sarah would have been seventeen, so maybe this was her senior year in high school. They, of course, knew everything. But they were pretty immune to it.

Reti: And you didn't live in Santa Cruz fulltime.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: So it wasn't like you were asking them to suddenly live in the chancellor's house and be part of the university that way.

Blumenthal: No. When I was acting chancellor, as I say, we never came over here. I think the expectations as acting chancellor are different than the expectations once I was permanent chancellor.

Let's come back to that question. It's a very, very fair question. When I was acting chancellor, Kelly came to whatever events made the most sense to come to. But she had her own life. One thing that really annoyed me was when I was finally appointed permanent chancellor, one member of the staff here who was fairly senior in University Relations, said to me, "Oh, this is wonderful. We're so happy that you were appointed. Now Kelly can quit her job and spend full-time on campus." My reaction was, have you

met me? Have you met my wife? I just couldn't believe that somebody would say that to me. It was so completely divorced from reality.

The Search for a Permanent UCSC Chancellor

Anyway, moving right along, why don't we start on the chancellor search, which was a high-tension thing for me, in many ways. First of all, the chancellor search is generally a non-transparent event. The chancellor search is not a transparent thing. They'll do an event on campus. And they'll appoint a search committee. Then at a certain point, everything goes dark while they do all the work. Then eventually it gets bright again when they announce the chancellor. (Reti laughs) I knew all of that. I'd been on chancellor search committees, as we've discussed, so none of that was a big surprise to me. This one was fraught in a number of ways. I had to make a decision whether I wanted to go for it, but I actually found that decision very easy because I was enjoying what I was doing, and it seemed to me I ought to go for it.

I remember having to attend the first meeting of the search committee on campus, where everyone makes their presentations and as the acting chancellor, it was appropriate that I do so as well. But it was awkward, because for me it was both talking about the campus, but in some subtle way underlying this was talking about myself. That was very stressful to me. But we got through that.

I know that it was an interesting day because there was a labor demonstration out front and there was a lot of loud shouting, which kind of interrupted the day. When I left, I was confronted by the labor demonstrators, so I stopped and I talked to them for about, I don't know, a good twenty minutes to a half an hour, talking about some of the issues that they were striking or wanting to demonstrate about. I didn't take that as a bad thing. It was just okay.

I was very pleased that Bob was using Alberto Pimentel²⁴⁴ who's the president of the search firm, to conduct the search. Search firms are important. I had worked with Alberto on previous chancellor searches for other campuses, so I already knew him well, and had a good relationship with him. Alberto's firm, Storbeck-Pimentel, is the only major search firm that's minority owned. Alberto is a very fair and very supportive person. I'll just point out to you that on searches that I've been personally in charge of, like the EVC search we had a couple of years ago, I used Alberto because I trust him.

Anyway, so working with him was good—I think in retrospect, probably even very good. The search, when I was chosen, was a little bit different than most of the searches I'd been previously familiar with, in that the faculty sub group decided to do phone interviews of all potential candidates that they were interested in. So the first interaction I had with the search committee was a phone interview. It was fine. I thought it went reasonably well, but I didn't know what was going to happen. But anyway, after the phone interview, I was told that I made the shortlist.

Reti: Meaning one of six?

Blumenthal: One of the six. Well, it was six. But then, things went to hell because Bob Dynes announced that he was going to step down within a year. Dynes announced that he was stepping down a few weeks before the interviews. I happened to have talked to Alberto around this time. Alberto was close to Bob, so I think Alberto was upset about that. But Alberto was upset because he was concerned that they had lined up six people to be interviewed. The first thing I heard was that one of them had dropped out because Dynes was leaving.

Reti: Because they wanted to know who they'd be working for.

Blumenthal: Yeah, of course. Or they wanted Dynes to be the one that they worked for and they weren't prepared to deal with uncertainty. So, Alberto was concerned, and then I became very concerned, that they would cancel the search and restart. Because he said there was another one who was iffy. I think that iffy person ultimately did interview, but I'm not sure. So they kept it together and it all happened. But not only was I nervous about the interview, but I was nervous about whether there'd even be an interview.

Then I had to deal with whether or not to prepare for the interview. So a few words about that. On the one hand, I thought I did need some real preparation because I remember one day I was at an event with the Staff Advisory Board and they were asking me questions. I'm very good at answering questions, but they asked me some question which was in some ways awkward at some level, about something, I don't remember what. I kind of hesitated and gave a very stammering answer. I didn't give a good answer. Ashish was there. And Ashish after the event said to me quite bluntly, "If you have any hope of being chancellor, you're going to have to answer questions better than that."

Reti: Oh, wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Well, it was true. It was true. And although I'm usually pretty good at that, those things, he was pointing out to me that there were points of sensitivity that maybe I wouldn't find so easy to deal with.

So I really had to make a decision. Do I do some preparation sessions? What should I do? I have, as I've mentioned before, been on a search committee and I have seen any number of interviews where the person being interviewed would have benefited enormously from having gone through preparation sessions, or videotaped himself or had a friend grade out, or a professional grade out his interview style. I've seen that over and over again, and

I've seen some people make humongous mistakes in their interviews, where they just blow it. So I was well aware of that.

On the other hand, I didn't really want to go through preparation. So I finally decided that what I would do is I would make up a list of questions, all of the questions I could think of. I discussed it with Ashish, so I had him add to the list as well. All the nasty questions we could ever think of. That's really what I was interested in, was knowing the questions, because I decided that I would just count on my ability to formulate answers to the questions, but I didn't want to be surprised by questions. So I prepared for every conceivable question I might get, or that I could think of, but I didn't actually do any real practicing.

So finally the interview came. I think I was scheduled as the last interview. The interview, I think it was like an hour and a quarter, or an hour and a half long. It wasn't long. The president was there. Most of the regents on the committee were there. The faculty were there, and the staff. I think virtually all of the search committee was there. So the way it went was they kind of queued up the first question: "What's your vision for the future of the campus?!" So everybody knew what the first question was going to be. I had kind of prepared what I was going to say about that. A lot of that was taken off of what Steve Chu had did when he was interviewing to be Lawrence Berkeley Lab director. I so liked the way he approached answering that question. After that they opened it up for questions. The first question I got was one I had not prepared for.

Reti: (laughter) I was afraid you were going to say that.

Blumenthal: It came from Kitty Woldow, head of the Staff Advisory Board. Kitty asked me the first question, which had to do with deferred maintenance. What was I going to do with the huge backlog of deferred maintenance, which is, of course, a legitimate question,

but I hadn't thought about it. I gave her an honest answer. I said that we're in such financial difficulties right now as a campus that we just don't have the money to do the appropriate amount of maintenance that we need to do to keep everything running. Our first priority has to be our students and offering the classes, making sure those are offered. We had a responsibility to put aside some money to make sure that stuff doesn't fall down, but we are adding to our deferred maintenance backlog. All I could do was answer it honestly.

Then we went around the table and people asked questions. I got lots and lots of interesting questions. Michael Brown, who was on the committee, wanted to know what was going on in Silicon Valley and at MBEST. I gave him a long answer about Silicon Valley, because we were starting a lot of stuff in Silicon Valley. I decided to not even go to MBEST, because my answer was already long enough, and MBEST wasn't going to be as clean an answer.

The most interesting question came from Eddie Island, the regent.²⁴⁵ I had anticipated the first half of his question, but not the second half of his question. The question that I had anticipated was basically: look, you haven't been a dean; you haven't been a vice chancellor; you haven't been a provost. You haven't been anything. So what makes you think you can be the chancellor of a campus? The way he framed the first half of his question was so much more elegant. I was so impressed with how he framed it. He said, "I've been talking to people, and everyone I've talked to says you've done a really excellent job as acting chancellor, and I want to give you kudos for that," he said. "But when I look at your file, I don't see the things that we normally look for in a chancellor candidate. I don't see you having been a vice chancellor, or a dean, or a provost, or a vice provost. You don't have any of those experiences." So he said, "I have two questions. One question is how did you do it? How did you manage to be so successful this year, given your lack of

experience?” The second part of the question was, “Do you think we’re looking for the wrong things when we do a chancellor hire? Should we have a broader perspective on the qualities that we look for?”

Reti: That’s a brilliant question.

Blumenthal: I thought so, too. I was certainly prepared for the first half of the question. I gave him an honest answer, which was I thought that I wasn’t completely inexperienced because I had been a department chair, and senate chair on the campus, and systemwide senate chair. And that in terms of the issues that the university was facing, through being systemwide senate chair, I said I basically understand all of the issues at a fairly deep level from day one, maybe at a deeper level than someone in a more limited capacity on a campus might have. So I talked about that, and I talked about the fact that yes, I didn’t have managerial experience, but that those were skills that you could pick up.

In terms of the second half of his question, I’m not sure I answered it well, but I said, yeah, I think we can be too constrained in terms of experience, and asking for a rigid set of experiences might very well limit us from choosing some excellent candidates.

Reti: Well, it strikes me that several of the chancellors we’ve had here came from outside of the UC system, or even outside of public universities. The fact that you had such solid UC systemwide perspectives and deep understandings is a phenomenal asset, in my opinion.

Blumenthal: Right. That’s how I felt. I think it’s obviously true.

So, yeah, that was great. But anyway, I was very happy with my answer to his question. So they kept going around the room, asking questions. And this sounds so strange for me to say this, but I was having fun. I was enjoying the experience.

Reti: That's wonderful.

Blumenthal: It's so strange, considering how nervous I was. You know, I did listen to *Rocky* on the drive all the way up the interview. (Reti laughs) I mean, there's no question about that. I absolutely did that. But I was enjoying the interview experience. It was kind of a high and it was a format that I was comfortable with. I don't mind being asked questions. I think I do better answering questions than I do giving prepared remarks.

Reti: I can see that, being part of this oral history process with you.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So it went very well. What shocked me was that at a certain point Alberto said, "Well, you know, there's only time for one more question. Our time is up." I was shocked. I thought we were maybe a quarter to a third of the way through the interview when he said that because I was having fun. I was kind of enjoying the moment.

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: Then it was over and I walked out. Bob Dynes shook my hand. He smiled and he said, "We'll be in touch, George."

I walked out with Alberto. Alberto looked at me and said, "You just hit a grand slam." I immediately went to my phone and I called my wife, I called Kelly, and I called Ashish because Ashish had helped prepare me. I told them what had happened. And then the waiting game began. (laughs)

So again, let me back up a little bit. Marty Chemers told me that when he was the acting chancellor and Denice was hired as chancellor, Marty was a candidate. Marty was actually very optimistic that he would be chosen, but he was very tense about it, and, he believes, somewhat ambivalent about it as well. He said it was really interesting. He said that first of all, he didn't get a call from Dynes. He got a call from Alberto telling him that he wasn't

hired. He didn't tell that to me in a complaining way. In fact, he only told that to me later. He didn't tell it to me when he told me the other part of the story. So I don't think he was deeply offended by that, although I was deeply offended that Dynes didn't call him. But what he said was that his staff knew that he was getting a call, and that this might be it. He said he took the call and learned that he had not been chosen. He said he felt so relieved that when he got up and walked out of his office and his staff saw him, he had a smile on his face, and they all thought that he had been given the offer. But in fact, it was just the opposite. In my case, it took time. I did have a couple of conversations with Alberto. He said, "Dynes is considering it and he hasn't made up his mind yet." He knew Dynes. He'd worked with him. He said he always takes a week or two to make a final decision.

Reti: So ultimately it's the president's decision.

Blumenthal: Yes. The president makes a recommendation to the regents, who confirm the decision.

So finally Alberto said, "Yeah, it's going to be you." I did get a call from Dynes, but it was by that point expected. Alberto had told me I would be getting a call with a job offer from Bob. So it didn't come out of the blue. I wasn't completely surprised.

But when I got the call, it was kind of funny. I had a meeting immediately after with somebody in some community group or something. It was with somebody who represented a group that I wasn't completely comfortable with. So I had to again do my poker face. So I got the call; I got this job offer to be chancellor. Then I immediately thereafter had a meeting that I had to just go through. You know, no whooping and cheering. But yeah, so I finally did get the call and they made the offer. There wasn't a lot of freedom there. I knew what Henry Yang's salary was, which was woefully low. I knew

they couldn't pay me more than Henry. So there wasn't any wiggle room on terms or anything like that. I just took whatever they offered. It's no haggling whatsoever, which frankly I'm happy about.

I don't even remember that Kelly and I particularly celebrated. I know that when I was appointed acting chancellor a year earlier, the night my appointment was announced as acting chancellor, Kelly and I went out to dinner at Baker's Square in Los Gatos. Which is like a Denny's, right?

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: It's not a fancy place. We're having dinner and all of a sudden I got a call while I'm in the middle of dinner from Sandy Faber, because she had just learned about my appointment. She was elated. She was just so excited. She said, "George, Andy and I want to take you to dinner."

I said, "Oh, that's so nice of you, Sandy. But we're already at dinner."

She said, "Oh, that's wonderful. Where did you go?"

Reti: Baker's Square. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I said, "Baker's Square," and she was so disappointed. She said, "You're celebrating becoming the chancellor of Santa Cruz at Baker's Square?!" I think we were in a hurry or we, first of all, Kelly tends to want to eat earlier than most people want to eat. Secondly, we had stuff to do in our lives. So it was nearby; it was simple. So, Baker's Square was where we celebrated acting chancellor.

So finally I got the offer. They told me to keep it quiet again. (laughs) I wasn't supposed to tell anyone. But I felt like, again, I had to tell Dave, who was very nice and

congratulatory. Dave offered his resignation, but it was pro forma. He felt like it was his obligation to do that because the chancellor should have the opportunity to appoint whomever he or she wants. Of course, I refused to accept his resignation.

Appointment as Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz

The appointment was going to be in a few weeks at the next regents meeting in Davis. So we went up to Davis. Meanwhile, University Relations had lined up a whole bunch of telephone calls for me to make to donors, to political leaders and the like, which, interestingly enough, I was supposed to do on the morning of my appointment, before my appointment took place from the regents. They assured me that that's the way it always worked with chancellors, although when, by mistake, I mentioned that in passing to Judy Hopkinson that I'd made calls that morning, she was furious that I would do that prior to officially being confirmed by the regents.

Speaking of Judy Hopkinson, sorry, I forgot to mention this last time when we were talking about the LRDP. I don't think I said this. I mentioned her difficult questions. But the day she'd asked all those difficult questions and I'd kind of managed to get through that, that night I think I was going to dinner with some people somewhere. And when I got back to the hotel after dinner, I ran into Judy in the lobby as I was coming in. She took me aside and she said, "You know, George, I don't know if you've considered staying on to become the permanent chancellor, but I really want to encourage you to think about that." It really meant a lot to me that Judy had said that to me. So that all factored into the decision. But again, that was much earlier.

My appointment was going to be, I think, on Thursday. But the first day of the regents meeting was Wednesday. I was there at Davis. I'm leaving and as I walk past Dick Blum— Dick may have just become the chair of the regents²⁴⁶ and he was talking with a reporter

I knew from the *LA Times*—as I walk by them, I just sort of said hello. Dick says, “Well, George, we’re all looking forward to your bar mitzvah tomorrow.” (Reti laughs) I kind of looked shocked because number one, he’s talking to a reporter, and the reporter knew exactly why I was looking so shocked. He said to me, “Don’t worry, George. I’m not going to say anything until tomorrow.”

When they finally got around in the regents meeting to making my appointment, somehow there was some confusion. I got called up there and I thought I was called up there to give my remarks, thanking them for the appointment and etcetera. So I started to give my remarks. But in fact, they hadn’t yet done the vote.

Reti: Oh, no. (laughter)

Blumenthal: Fortunately, one of the regents stopped me. He said, “No, no, you’re jumping the gun here.”

Reti: (laughs) Awkward.

Blumenthal: I was so anxious to get this done. But it finally worked out okay. Then Kelly and I had a press conference together, where they asked us a bunch of questions, which I thought went fine. I was proud. It was nice to be with her at a press conference. And again, coming back to an issue you raised a little while ago, I was always really clear that I hoped Kelly could take on some of the roles on campus, but that she is a professional, and her profession has to come first. Yes, she was going to have a role, and we all knew that. She has played that role, but that she’s got a life as well. I think that’s a very reasonable thing. It was awkward because at the time, I don’t know that we’d had a lot of chancellors at UCSC whose spouses had their own professional activities. And furthermore, at the time in the UC system, among the other chancellors, most of the spouses did not have professional activities. The only one that I could think of offhand was Bob Dynes. His wife

was a physicist at Berkeley. So I really wanted to be clear that the expectations that Kelly should face are not necessarily the same as the expectations that some of the other spouses of chancellors were able to meet. I don't think that's ever been a huge point of sensitivity.

Then after the appointment, that night the Silicon Valley Leadership Group did a reception for me in Silicon Valley, which was really nice. We came back for that. And then afterwards, Sandy Faber and her husband Andy were there at that reception. So we all went to dinner together.

Reti: You finally had that dinner that Sandy wanted you to have.

Blumenthal: We finally had the dinner.

Reti: Probably not at Baker's Square.

Blumenthal: It was not at Baker's Square. No. (laughter) So that all worked out.

So given that I was appointed chancellor, I had to be inaugurated. And God, what a big *megillah* that was. It turned out mine was the last of the big inaugurations. After that, because of budget cuts, they scaled them way back because in my inauguration, UCOP picked up a good chunk of the costs.

And it was kind of weird. I think you probably know me well enough now to know that I wasn't exactly looking forward to having a big *event* to celebrate me. I was quite prepared to believe that this was the campus rather than me, but nevertheless, there was no question that I was the center of attention. So it wasn't an easy thing for me to think about.

As we started to plan for it, we did all the right things. We put together a committee. Steve Thorsett agreed to chair the committee and he did a very, very good job. I was very grateful

to him for doing it, but it was also surreal. Thank God I didn't have to go to all the meetings of the preparation committee, but I went to a few and they kept asking me, "Well, what do you want?" Like I knew what the hell I wanted? I wanted to get through this.

Reti: Right. (laughter)

Blumenthal: It was funny. My goal was not to make a fool of myself. But it was an interesting experience. They did a lot of work preparing for putting together the program, putting together the speakers, deciding on the venue. We finally decided that the venue would be the East Field. We set it up as kind of a prelude to graduation so that a lot of people could attend. It was a very big deal on the campus and probably one of our largest inaugurations because it wasn't limited by a building the way so many of the other ones had been. So it was quite impressive. Of course, I had to do a speech and the speech had to be a good one. University Relations brought in a marketing person who was an alum, who had not been particularly active with the campus beforehand, and frankly, I don't think she's been that active afterwards, either. But she was happy to volunteer her time to come in and work with me on writing the speech and delivering the speech. She was so, so generous with her time, and so helpful. She helped me put together the speech into a form that made sense. She had worked with companies and she worked for a big company and helped do their messaging. She really did know how to do these things and how to do the presentation. We spent many hours writing the speech and then practicing the speech. And then like a day or two before the event, the campus bought a teleprompter. We were immediately faced with the question of whether I should use the teleprompter or not. I decided I wanted to use it. I like the idea of using a teleprompter. I'm so tall that for me it's always difficult to be at a podium, because podiums are usually so low. I don't know if you've noticed that.

Reti: (laughs) What do you think? I think we have the opposite problem. [Interviewer is short.]

Blumenthal: Well, when I went to the inauguration of Gene Block as chancellor at UCLA, the thing I was most impressed with was their main speaker at the inauguration: Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.²⁴⁷ When he came up to give his speech, he got up there at the podium, which came up to his knees, and slowly the podium started rising out of the stage. It rose and rose and rose.

Reti: It knew how tall he was.

Blumenthal: Well, Kareem was like seven-foot-two. It was an adjustable podium. I was so impressed. I thought it was hilarious that this podium kept rising to Kareem's level. But for me, most podiums are too short.

Reti: I see. You're trying to see your notes way down there.

Blumenthal: So I like the idea of a teleprompter. I didn't realize, or maybe someone didn't warn me, that it does take experience to get used to a teleprompter. But I took to it right away. I really liked it. I liked it very much and I ended up using it a fair amount. I haven't lately, but certainly for a while I used it a lot.

The trick to the teleprompter is getting it to scroll at the right speed.

Reti: Yeah, I can imagine. It could get really messed up otherwise.

Blumenthal: You can even do that yourself by having a little clicker, or you have somebody there who does it for you. I didn't want to do it myself. It was too much to do—to do everything else and to scroll it. So I forget who did it, but somebody went there and kind of sat on the floor below the podium and scrolled it for me, and made sure it didn't

screw up. They did a good job. I'll tell you how good a job they did. Because one of the people at the inauguration was Larry Hershman, whom I'd mentioned a few minutes ago. He and his wife came down for it. Afterwards he came up to me and he told me how impressed he was that I'd memorized the speech.

Reti: Oh, wow. (laughter) You were a natural.

Blumenthal: Of course, I hadn't.

Reti: Right. But the fact that you could use a teleprompter with that much fluidity is amazing.

Blumenthal: So that was interesting. I was certainly surprised by the turnout, which was very, very large. We did have demonstrations there. AFSME decided to demonstrate. So again, I had to go through practices of what to do if people were trying to interrupt the speech, which they did.

Reti: What *do* you do?

Blumenthal: Well, the interrupters were far away, so their volume wasn't that high. The theory is, you just talk right through it. You ignore it as if it isn't happening. And that's what I did.

The biggest challenge was Dick Blum, who was the chair of the regents. Of course, I do my speech at some point in the program, and that was all fine and good. But there's a lot of other speeches. There's a welcome speech from the city. There's a welcome speech from the regents. The faculty; a president of another university; another UC chancellor. All of those people get up and give speeches. Sitting in the front row on the stage, I've got a very simple job. My job is to pay attention to them. Right?

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Well, Dick Blum was sitting next to me and he did give his remarks at the beginning. But he started talking to me throughout the thing. He pulled out his Blackberry and he's reading his mail and he's sitting in the front row on stage. Every now and then, he'd turn to me and he'd start talking to me about something. Of course, I didn't want to be impolite to him, but I also realized that my job was to pay attention to the people talking at the podium, and if I were just talking to Blum, that would just not look good. (Reti laughs) So it was very, very awkward as I tried to handle that situation.

But I remember that the talks were very, very nice, very, very supportive. Ryan Coonerty gave a talk from the city. He said, "We've declared this George Blumenthal Day." It was very nice. One of the alumni speakers was Reyna Grande.²⁴⁸ She felt deeply some of the concerns raised by the union and she acknowledged that and talked about her background, which I thought was also just fine. I had no problem with that at all.

It was nice having family and friends there. I have a small family, but rarely have I seen my family come together. Kelly's cousins came from Minnesota, which was very nice. My sister and her husband came from Sacramento. And my kids were there. We don't have many events where that large a group of people are together. I doubt if Kelly's cousins and my sister and her family had ever met either before. In fact, I'm sure they haven't. Afterwards we had a bunch of people over to University House and we had a reception. We had family there, but also friends— people like Michael Brown; people like Maria Bertero-Barceló, I think M.R.C. Greenwood—people who we were one way or another fairly close—over to the house for a big reception.

I think the next day, I think my family went home, but Kelly's cousins stayed and I took them down to the Seymour Center, and did a tour of the Seymour Center. I had no idea

that it would be so appreciated by people there. To this day, I still hear from them how pleased they were that I did that. To me it was no big deal. Of course I would want to take them to the Seymour Center. But it was really appreciated by people there.

Anyway, that was the inauguration. It was a good-feeling event. I was pleased we did it. We had a dinner for all the visiting dignitaries. I was pleased that virtually all of the other chancellors were there. Many regents were there. So I felt somewhat honored relative to Denice where only one regent came. But of course, I had a relationship with the regents.

Reti: You were very much a known person in that neck of the woods.

Blumenthal: So it was nice. In all, it was very, very nice, although for me there was a lot of angst as we approached the event.

More on Rebenching

All right. So, next is rebenching. So are you ready for some policy now?

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So we've already talked about this a little bit, when I talked about the first meeting with the president, and my concern about the ratio of state dollars per student on the campuses. Just a little bit of background—I knew that I could frame the issue in a number of ways. I preferred to frame it as state dollars per student, but I also knew that in the distant past there had been allocations to the campuses based upon what level students were at, so when a graduate student passed his or her qualifying exam and was advanced to candidacy, they were worth three and a half freshmen.

Reti: Right. So, yes, that is the ancient history. I recall that Dean McHenry was very upset when that—I don't know if it was specifically about advance to candidacy issue—

Blumenthal: No, but there was a hierarchy of scale.

Reti: —of the graduate students getting more funding— According to your knowledge, do you think that that was one of the factors in Santa Cruz falling behind, because there weren't enough graduate programs, enough graduate students, to bring up our funding early in the campus' history.

Blumenthal: So let's forget now for the moment.

Reti: Bookmark that, yeah.

Blumenthal: We're going to come back to now. Certainly what you say is true in terms of the early campus. Your question is: why when I became chancellor was our dollars per student—any way you measured it, whether you measured it per student, or per weighted student—why was it so far out of whack compared to the rest of the UC system? There were several reasons. First, to remind you, the way the university had been doing budgeting for many, many years, maybe decades, was that they always based the next year's budget on last year's budget. So if they gave the campus X dollars and the state gave us 10 percent more money, they would give us X plus 10 percent of X. It was always based upon the previous year's funding. But no one ever went back and said, let's rethink what the baseline is, or what the previous years have been since time immemorial. What are the justifications for doing what we do?

I think that the disparities were due to a few things. One is the weighted allocation formula that was used for many years at UC, the one that you said McHenry was upset about that weighted graduate students, particularly advanced graduate students, quite heavily. But even beginning graduate students got weighted much more heavily than an undergraduate. And an upper-division student was weighted more than a lower division student. So campuses that had high transfer rates got more money.

When later on the university changed to a per student formula, they did it in a way that preserved the existing budgets of the campuses. So think of it this way—some campuses like Santa Cruz and Riverside, when we switched over to a per student funding formula, at that point our base budgets weren't that high because we'd never had that many graduate students. But if we had been able to increase our graduate enrollments after the switchover, we would never have gotten credit for that, because by that time we were just paid in dollars per student. So we were in the worst of all possible worlds, relative to the weighted formula, by the way allocations had been done.

And then there's a second factor, which had to do with organized research. The university set up organized research units on the various campuses. All campuses have organized research units. But back through most of our early history, organized research units were paid for separately by the Office of the President, not by the campus. So some campuses, like Berkeley, had a lot of organized research units that were funded by the Office of the President. Santa Cruz had relatively few organized research units. When that got changed, and it got changed in a way that the campuses were expected to henceforth fully fund their ORUs, the way they did that was transfer all of the ORU money to the campuses and say, "Now you pay for it." But when they transferred the ORU money to the campuses, we got very little at Santa Cruz because we didn't have many ORUs. But campuses that had a lot of organized research units got lots of money transferred to them.

So those were two of the reasons why the allocations for Santa Cruz and a few other campuses were well below the UC average. I won't swear to you that that's all of the reasons. I mean, no one's ever gone back and done the forensic analysis to determine all the reasons, but I'm sure those are two of the biggest reasons.

So, for historic reasons, we were underfunded. I think that's obvious and clear. Dynes was pretty much on his way out very soon after I was appointed chancellor, so there wasn't going to be change coming from there. And when Mark Yudof came in, I had a number of opportunities to discuss this with Mark. Part of the reason I got nowhere was a philosophical reason. Whereas Dynes was all about the power and promise of ten, I soon learned that with Mark Yudof, I never used those words. He did not want to hear those words. Certainly, when he started, he was more in the mode of every boat floats on its own bottom. He'd been the head of the Texas system, where not all universities are created equal, and where there's no intention to create all universities equal. The same is true with the University of Minnesota system, so he was not at all sympathetic to my arguments about the disparities of the funding of the various campuses. That was just not a place that he was prepared to go.

I'll talk about this a little bit more when I talk about Mark. He's a smart guy and he's not completely inflexible. So there were a variety of things that slowly began to change his mind. He and I developed a very good relationship. I think he had respect for me, so he was willing to take me more seriously the better he knew me. I also credit Mary Croughan,²⁴⁹ who was then the chair of the Academic Senate. She became good friends with Mark. They had many conversations and I think she really helped him acclimate to UC, and think about UC in different ways, having come in from the outside.

But in any event, I raised this issue many times with Mark and got nowhere, until we were heading into one of the darkest periods in our history, after the great recession. There was a year in which we had made massive cuts to our budget. I think that was the year that the state cut funding for UC so deeply that the decrease in state funding—I'm only talking about state funding now—the decrease in state funding to the UC system was equal to the total state funding for Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara and UCLA. That was one year of budget

cuts to UC. It was the equivalent of zeroing out state funds for Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and UCLA. So it was deep. And yes, there was a tuition increase, but it didn't come close to making up for those deep cuts.

So we had to make very deep cuts on campus. And maybe at a later time, I'll talk about how other campuses responded to this time. But at Santa Cruz, we basically balanced our budget every year, no matter how painful, no matter how horrible, we just balanced our budget. Part of it is we didn't have a lot of other sources of revenue that we could use to make up for the difference. We didn't have a lot of donor money. We didn't have a lot of nonresident tuition. We didn't have any of the things that some of the other campuses used to buffer their budgets. We also didn't have the level of reserves that some of the campuses had. So, we didn't have a lot of choice. We did have enough reserves that we could have waded through things for a couple of years. But it seemed imprudent to me to not just bite the bullet, as bad as it is, and balance the budget. So we basically balanced our budget every year. But the year I'm thinking of was the worst year. I think it was probably 2009, but we need to check that.

Mark had instituted budget meetings with the chancellors, so every year we had a meeting with Mark to talk about the campus budget. They were interesting meeting, in that we did a lot of preparations for these meetings. We'd prepare all these gazillions of tables and financial sheets and you name it. And we'd always try to figure out what was going on with the other campuses, if they met with him first, to better understand what he was looking for. Mark had a couple of campuses, like one eighty miles to the north, and maybe one or two others, about whose financial status he was really concerned, so he was critical and gave them a hard time and delved in deeply. However, for Santa Cruz, he rarely showed much interest at all. We'd go through our presentations. He'd ask very few questions. He was not interested, which I took to mean he was not concerned with what we were doing.

We were kind of below his radar in terms of what he was going to worry about, but he still met with us, just as he did with all of the campuses.

Well, at this budget meeting, after I'd been lobbying for some time for action on rebenching— although I didn't yet know the word—I was showing him how we had made deep cuts in our budget. I was showing him that we had taken 30 percent cuts in administration and 30 percent cuts in academic support, but only like 10 or 15 percent cuts in our academic programs. That's how we had balanced our budget under those extreme circumstances that year.

And he said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. Good, good, good."

I said, "Well, wait a minute, Mark. Don't just say that. This is important." I said, "I just want to emphasize to you that I have not cut across the board. If I did across the board cuts, you'd fire me because you'd argue that I wasn't exercising discretion, which I should be doing as the leader of the campus. But these are definitely not across-the-board cuts. We've cut as little as possible into the academic mission of the university."

He said, "Oh, yeah. That's very good. I'm glad you did."

I said, "Well, you'd fire me otherwise."

He said, "Well, maybe not. But we'd have a talk if you hadn't done that."

I said, "So you'd have that expectation of me, that I would exercise judgment and try to do the reasonable thing, rather than mindlessly cutting across the board?"

He said, "Yeah."

I said, "So why can't I have that same expectation of you?" (laughter)

Well, he got it at that point. He understood exactly what I was saying. He visibly winced and he said, “Okay, you’ve convinced me. We’ll do it. We will convene a group to look at rebenching of the university state budget. And we’ll start that right away.”

Debbie Obley,²⁵⁰ who was then the vice president of budget in the university, was sitting there. She said, “Well, but we don’t have the resources to do that now. We don’t have the staff support in our budget office to undertake a study of that magnitude. We just can’t do it.”

So I said, “You know, Mark, if I asked my vice chancellor of budget to do something and tell her it’s important, it’s going to get done. If it’s an important priority to do, it’s an important priority to do.” Because I really didn’t want to take this bullshit from—I mean, I knew she wasn’t in favor of what I was proposing and she was going to try to delay it to death.

To his credit, Mark said, “No, this is important. If we’re going to do it, we’ll do it.” So he appointed a rebenching committee chaired by CFO Nathan Brostrom and University Provost Larry Pitts. It was a committee that had representation from every campus. Several chancellors were on it. I think Henry Yang was on it. Henry was not deeply engaged what was going on throughout most of this. (Reti laughs) But I was on it. Various budget people. And we convened.

I know it was very awkward at our first meeting because when they convened the meeting, Larry turned to me and said, “George is responsible for this. Let’s hear from George what he thinks the reason why we’ve gathered here together.”

So I gave my little spiel for why rebenching made sense. And then I think it was the vice chancellor of budget at UCLA, Steve Olson²⁵¹—he was a good guy, I like Steve a lot—but they went around the room and asked everyone what the ideal outcome of the committee’s

work would be. And when they got to Steve Olson, he said, “The ideal outcome, from my perspective, is that we declare this the last meeting and we go home.” Steve knew that UCLA would be a loser in this proposition.

But, fortunately, we persevered. It became a question of coming up with principles. Many of the principles were very simple. Every student should count the same, no matter what their field is. We shouldn’t be allocating different amounts depending upon what majors or graduate programs people are in.

Reti: Had that been the case?

Blumenthal: No, but it had been discussed as a possibility. But anyway, that was one principle. It should be independent of campus. We should just have one formula that worked. I think the consensus of the committee was that there was a need to do weighting again, to weight students, which didn’t surprise me. My preference would have been not to weight students. But I also have to admit it does cost a lot more to educate a medical student or a graduate student. At least as a matter of principle, I was prepared to accept this as basically how money would be distributed from the state throughout the system.

But of course, there’s devil in the details. So one detail was the weightings—I think, a very important detail. I fought very hard to keep the effect of the weightings to a minimum. I did this with some success, but very limited success. I jumped on the issue. The first thing I insisted on was that master’s students should be weighted the same as undergraduates. First of all, in terms of lower-division and upper-division students, I believe it is the case, on the average, that upper-division students are more expensive. But it also is true that in certain academic divisions, they’re cheaper. PB Sci has told me it’s cheaper for them to educate a senior than it is a frosh because of the laboratory requirements. It isn’t clear how we should differentiate among undergraduates, so we all agreed that all

undergraduates would have the same weighting. And having gotten there, I argued strongly that master's students should have the same weighting because most master's students just take classes, just as undergraduates do. So it was a major victory to get a weighting of one for all of those students, which was very different from what it had been in the old days. I also did know that Santa Cruz had the smallest percentage of master's students of any of the campuses, but PhD students and health science students were a different story.

So UCOP came in, which really meant Debbie came in, and made a proposal that it made sense to have a weighting of 3.5 for graduate students studying for a PhD. I argued about it. We had lots of discussions and finally we kind of came to a compromise. It was an unprincipled compromise, in the sense that it wasn't like there was some solid reason for picking a number that made intrinsic sense. It was a compromise, for what it's worth: the compromise was 2.5 for PhD students, but with an understanding that we didn't want to inhibit campuses without high numbers of PhD students from achieving what might be simply some minimum number of PhD students.

After a lot of discussion, we set that minimum number as, I think, 8 or 9 percent in terms of PhD per undergraduate. We're below that ratio on our campus. Maybe one other campus was below. But the idea was that even though we were below that number, that the university would still fund us for those students as though they were here up to that minimum, at least until we had sufficient time to build up that percentage of students on our own. But there was an expectation that at some point in the not-so-distant future, we would build up that number of students. That's how we handled the graduate student situation. So the campus got, and continues to get, money for graduate students that we don't have, which isn't a bad deal. But still, the rating of two and a half is fairly high. On the other hand, it's not three and a half.

And then the issue came up of what do we do with health science students. That was more difficult because they were proposing a really high number for that. I think they ended up at five. But I think they even, at one point, were proposing a higher number for health science students. I kept arguing that they were just pulling those numbers out of a hat, that they had no basis in any financial model or in any practical model. They're just numbers that somebody thought up. So we agreed that we would form a subcommittee to try to come up with a principled number that could come out of the health sciences thing. I was appointed co-chair of the subcommittee with the number two person in their division of health sciences at UCOP—Cathryn Nation.²⁵²

So, Cathy and I had a bunch of meetings of our little sub-group. I think we also included Jim Chalfont in the group. I always liked Jim. He later became the chair of the Academic Senate. Jim was very smart, very capable, very funny guy, and very personable.

So we asked for and got a pile of data from all the medical centers and from all the medical schools, and from the Office of the President in health sciences. We got more data than you could ever imagine, but we never got data that was in a form that we could actually translate into a clear understanding of what it costs to educate a health sciences student. The data that we really wanted wasn't available, or couldn't be had. It turned out to be an impossible task and it turned out to be a task that we were so data short on—I mean, I'm okay with sometimes guessing or interpolating or doing reasonable things to try to get to a number—but we couldn't even do that. Ultimately, the effort of our subgroup failed. So we ended up with a ratio of five for health sciences students. I think that that has proven to be a mistake, and has proven to be problematic. The reason is that there are campuses like Davis, which have just started a major new and large nursing program. I would be perfectly prepared to believe that it costs five times as much to educate a medical student

as it does a frosh. But I don't believe it costs five times as much to educate a nurse as it does a frosh.

Reti: Mm hmm. So it was just across-the-board health sciences.

Blumenthal: It was just an across-the-board factor of five for people in the medical sciences. So schools that became rich in the cheaper medical professions, like nursing, for example, got a huge windfall, whereas other campuses that didn't have nursing programs didn't get that kind of windfall. I was never convinced that we did health sciences right. On the other hand, it's not as though I had a better model. So that was a compromise we had to make.

A third compromise was that there were a number of programs on the campuses that were still funded by systemwide, like psychiatric facilities such as the Mind Institute at Davis. A bunch of other things. There was a whole list of things that were funded directly by UCOP off the top, that were on the campuses. The debate became whether or not those items should be moved onto the campus budgets rather than paid for by the system. I, of course, wanted everything to become a campus responsibility, and the campuses that had a lot of those institutes wanted none of them to become the responsibility of the campuses.

So at the end of the day, we ended up doing about half. I cannot tell you that it was a principled decision. I think there were people there who felt that there were some principles behind those decisions. But to me, the only principle that would have made sense is if these institutes had systemwide implications or applications. If they were truly serving the system, then I wouldn't have had a problem with it. But I don't think that was true of all of them.

So anyway, we eventually finished our work and came up with a rebenching plan. We agreed that we needed to implement it in a way that would harm no campus, so that we

would only implement it as a way of distributing extra resources that come to the system from the state. So when the state gave us more money, we would use that more money to try to get to the final state of a fully rebenched university.

Reti: But you were in the middle of a giant recession.

Blumenthal: Well, that's true but we also knew that wouldn't last forever. So the idea was a six-year plan to rebench, so that at the end of the six years all of the money at UC would be distributed to the campuses in a way that was consistent with rebenching. I think it was six years, but it could have been eight.

And the culmination, actually passed a couple of years ago. We're now fully rebenched. And in fact, Janet decided during one year, that they would take half of the new money and distribute it the old way, and the other half of the money would be distributed it in a way to bring us up to full rebenching. They changed that ratio so that we actually achieved rebenching a year early. It was transformative for the campus. We ended up with enough money to hire one hundred new faculty members.

Reti: Excellent.

Blumenthal: And even though, as I said, rebenching didn't go as far as I had hoped—we didn't get as much as I had hoped from it, or I thought we should have gotten—I got the best deal I could.

Reti: That's a fine achievement.

Blumenthal: On the other hand, we didn't really get to hire those hundred faculty members because what we ended up having to do was basically hollow out a lot of those positions because of the budget cuts.

Reti: I'm sorry, I'm not following you.

Blumenthal: Yeah, so the problem is, we were getting more money from rebenching while our budget was being cut. So even though we got more money, we were using that money to fill holes. One of the consequences was we could not really invest in graduate education for a number of years because we were losing money, not gaining money, so we couldn't build up to the minimum number of graduate students that were the expectations of the campuses. Of course, I've used that argument with Janet [Napolitano] to argue they shouldn't hold our feet to the fire on the graduate education front, so far, successfully.

We essentially couldn't use much of the rebenching money to actually hire a hundred faculty right away to fill out our ranks, because on the one hand, we were adding faculty; on the other hand, we were hollowing out faculty positions.

Reti: Hollowing out means?

Blumenthal: Well, we still had the position, but we didn't have any money in the position. So when somebody left and retired—

Reti: You wouldn't replace them and so then departments would shrink. And then you would get rebenching money and you would just retrench to where you were before that cut.

Blumenthal: Yeah, exactly.

Reti: Okay, thank you. I just want to make sure that I follow it because I'm not sure the reader would, either.

Blumenthal: I appreciate that.

But now that the budget has largely recovered and we've refunded the faculty positions we had hollowed out, basically rebenching has been a major advantage for the campus. We've hired many more faculty as a result of the money we've gotten from rebenching and we've used the money for other things as well, TAs, for example. We've used it to support graduate education. We buy out the first two years of nonresident tuition for graduate students now. So we've done a lot of very good things that most of us would be happy that we did it. That wouldn't have been possible without rebenching. The campus over the last decade has been in much, much better shape because of rebenching. It's been a huge boon to the campus, but it hasn't been the kind of boon that made us suddenly rich and well-to-do. It was the kind of boon that avoided a disaster, if you know what I mean.

Reti: I do understand what you mean.

Blumenthal: So it was important, and it was a good thing that we did it, and it puts us in a better position for the future. But it didn't have as much of a positive effect as I might otherwise have hoped, just because of the economic times.

We weren't the only campus that had advantages. Santa Barbara and Irvine were the other two big winners. In fact, after it was over, Henry came over to me and said, "Did you know it was going to come out this way?"

I said, "Yeah, it was obvious." (Reti laughs)

He said, "Well, I'm just really grateful you did this." Because I don't think he knew.

For San Francisco, it was devastatingly bad. San Francisco has a lot of state money, but no students, so ultimately the university had to make a special deal with San Francisco, which I didn't mind.

UCLA ended up being a loser, but my heart didn't bleed too much, because they had all of the advantages of the nonresident students that we'll talk about a little bit later. So I think that my heart isn't going to bleed too much for them or Berkeley.

Reti: What about Riverside?

Blumenthal: Riverside, I think, wasn't as big a winner as I thought they would be I think in part because they had ANR (Agriculture and Natural Reserves) money. They were one of the three agricultural campuses. So they had funding from that. So they didn't end up being quite the big winner. They will, though, as they go forward, because of their medical school. They'll get a lot of funding from that. So it really varied from campus to campus throughout the system.

We still face this challenge of not having achieved the graduate student numbers. That's something we're going to have to face up to. So far, Janet has not held our feet to the fire. I've been proactive in raising this issue with her so she understands it. We need to continue to do that, and be upfront about it, and be upfront about the reasons why we haven't achieved those numbers.

Today Nathan Brostrom has been talking about rebenching reconsidered, about going back and thinking again about rebenching. I think he's motivated by a couple of things. One, I completely agree with. There's still systemwide funding for some of these institutes on campuses. I think he'd like to revisit that and just get rid of them all off the books of UCOP. I'm all for it. I think he also realizes that there's still disparity in the campuses because of the nonresident tuition issue. He would like to have some adjustments to take that into account in some way as we allocate money out to the campuses. I wouldn't mind if they revisited, for example, the health sciences formula. Even if five should be the average number throughout the system, I don't think that leads to a distribution among

the health sciences campuses that's the right number. That doesn't affect Santa Cruz. But it's only the size of the number that affects Santa Cruz, but not the distribution among the campuses.

I think reconsidering rebenching makes sense. I'm not worried they're going to go back to the bad old days, so I think that's fine. But they'll be doing it without me. Although, who knows? If I end up doing some work up there, I might get sucked into this.

Since stepping down as chancellor, I've learned from Kim Wilcox²⁵³ at UCR that he's also pushing for the system to revisit rebenching. He argues that some campuses have taken on a greater burden of moving less prepared students and nontraditional students to timely graduation, and that those campuses should receive extra funding for those challenges. These are the campuses that have fewer sources of funding. I fully support his point of view.

Funding Streams

So kind of around the same time, there was an effort that's called funding streams that entailed a number of different issues at the same time. While I was involved in pieces of this quite actively, my level of involvement wasn't anything like that of rebenching. I could lay claim to being the father of rebenching, but I couldn't lay claim to being the father of funding streams.

The idea of funding streams is to look at the various other streams of funding for the campus and for UCOP and try to make sense of them all. I mentioned one of them already, which has to do with California tuition. I think I mentioned to you that we were only getting back 67 cents on the dollar for the tuition that our students paid.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: And that wasn't fair. Funding streams was an acknowledgement of the unfairness of that situation. This was an effort to address that, but it was also an effort to address a whole bunch of other things at the same time. Funding streams became kind of a hodgepodge of issues all mashed together. You can't think of each one of them entirely separately.

A second piece of funding streams had to do with nonresident tuition. Prior to funding streams, campuses did not get to keep their nonresident tuition. It was distributed across the system. They may have been able to keep some fraction of it, but they didn't get to keep it all themselves. So the first fundamental principle in funding streams that was established was that you eat what you catch. That is to say, if the campus generates income, it gets to keep that income, whether it be state tuition or whether it be nonresident tuition. The campuses basically get to keep the tuition they collect. Eat what you catch was the word of the day. I thought that was a good thing, because I was so concerned about the tuition issue. I knew that we benefited a bit from others' nonresident tuition, but I didn't yet appreciate what a big role that was going to play in the university.

Now it was important that when we went over to a funding streams methodology that this not be a sudden shock to the various campuses. So they arranged to do it in a way that made the changes more gradual, rather than make it one fell swoop that we were in this new methodology. And again, that's not an unreasonable thing to do. They figured out how to do that.

They also, as a part of funding streams, came up with a new mechanism by which UCOP was funded because if the funding is all coming ultimately to the campuses, who is going to pay for UCOP? In the past, what had happened was all the money went to UCOP, including tuition. UCOP, like the Mafia, took its piece of the action. (Reti laughs) Then

they would distribute what's left over back to the campuses based upon whatever formula they used. Now we're basically saying that all the money belongs to the campuses. So how you going to pay for UCOP?

Well, the obvious answer is you tax the campuses. People object when I use the word "tax." They prefer to use other words, but ultimately, that's what it is. It's a flat tax on the campuses. And the decision, after a lot of discussion, was made that the taxes would be charged on the campus expenditures. So when you paid taxes to UCOP, the tax you paid, whatever that percentage of tax was, was based upon your total expenditure as a campus—the entire campus, not just academic, but medical, auxiliary, everything. It was like a flat tax on everything.

There was also an agreement made that a campus could pay that tax with any color of money that it wanted. Let me explain that a little bit. When we collect money, every type of money is a little bit different. So for example, we collect money from the state of California, that's ultimately got a little "s" on it from state of California. State of California money, by law, can only be spent in certain ways. Sometimes we get money from tuition. Tuition can be spent a little bit more liberally than can state of California money. Money we get back from overhead on contracts and grants is in many cases much more free in terms of how we can spend it. Or we get money from gifts, from donors. That money's usually not very free in terms of how we can spend it.

Every kind of money comes in a different color, and each of them has their own constraints on what they can be used for. But the feeling was that UCOP was so big, and the system so complex, that we would let the campuses pay their taxes using any color of money they wanted. So it was going to be a flat tax, and you pay it in whatever money type you want.

Reti: I'm not sure I understand what you mean. So UCSC is taxed and then we could decide we're going to pay UCOP in contracts and grants overage money?

Blumenthal: We might pay them in contracts and grants money, for overhead. Or we might decide we'll pay them in state money.

Reti: Oh, so the campus can manage which pot of its budget pays UCOP.

Blumenthal: Yes. Exactly.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: Or we could pay them out of housing, for example.

Reti: I see. So there's some flexibility in looking at which parts of the campus have more funding at that time to be able to pay—

Blumenthal: It has to do with how much funding you've got on each part of the campus. It also has to do with how flexible that money is, etcetera. But the end result was that the UCOP was funded out of a big combination of different types of money. So that agreement was ultimately negotiated and put in place.

That was all fine with me, except that after the agreement was put in place, and it was an agreement about everything, then some campuses complained—UCLA and San Francisco and a few others—that this was unfair to them because taxing all expenditures didn't make sense, because expenditures in the health sciences are different than expenditures in other areas of the university. So they decided that they would renegotiate the tax approach, which annoyed me to no end, because I felt as though we had this grand deal where everything was on the table. We had made compromises on some things in order to get others and now they were going to renegotiate only a small piece of this agreement.

That, I thought, was extremely annoying. But anyway, that's what happened. So they came up with a much more complicated formula based upon expenditures, and based upon various other factors. I'm not sure I could tell it to you off the top of my head. In fact, I'm sure I couldn't.

Now why is that level of detail so important? Well, it turns out today it's much more important because of the implications of the state audit that took place for UCOP a few years ago. We'll come back to other aspects of the audit later. But there was a state audit of UCOP, of the UCOP budget, that raised a number of questions about the UCOP budget. There were, of course, other issues associated with the state audit, such as SurveyGate, which we will come back to. But the result was that the state auditors said that there was money that wasn't being overseen by the regents in the UCOP budget. I think that that was a gross overstatement. But be that as it may, the state assembly, in its infinite wisdom, decided, as a result of that, that they would insist that the university no longer tax the campuses for UCOP. Instead, the state would fund UCOP directly out of state funds. So there's a line item in the UC budget which funds UCOP, but precludes UCOP from getting any additional funds by taxing the campuses.

Now, when I said "they fund UCOP," I don't mean that they added extra money to fund UCOP. What I mean is that they took money away from the system to put into this line item to fund UCOP. So it's all money that would have gone to UC anyway, but they've now designated this money to fully fund UCOP.

But think about it. This is nuts. Before this happened, UCOP was funded, I don't know, maybe 50 percent by state money and 50 percent by health sciences money, for example. Some of it by housing money. Various different kinds of money. But insisting that it be entirely funded by state money means there's less state money to distribute around to the

other campuses. That means that campuses like Santa Cruz, which are more highly dependent on state money than the rest of the system are going to be the big losers because we will get a smaller allocation of state money to do our own thing with—our teaching and research—than we would have gotten under the old system, where the taxes could be paid by any form of money by the campuses. So it was a decision that was very stupid because it basically used state money for things that state money didn't have to be used for. That was about three years ago that the state did this. They passed this budget. I went and I lobbied in Sacramento against this because I thought then, as I think now, it's really stupid. And because of all the kerfuffle surrounding the audit, anything that I said had no weight. So it got passed.

Last year. I thought maybe reason would prevail and the state would back away from this, especially since the state senate, not the assembly, was taking the lead on the budget. But at the end of the day, they did the same damn thing. Now if you look in the new governor's budget, I think it's the same story again.

I believe that the recommendation from the auditor was to do this for three years. So I'm hoping that even if they do do it for this third year, that they will back away from it subsequently. It is adverse to the UCSC campus. It annoys me greatly that when I point this out to people who are our representatives in Sacramento, who should be concerned about disadvantaging campuses in their districts, that it doesn't have more of a response than it does. I've spent a fair amount of time lobbying on this issue. I realize that there are forces at work here, and I understand some of the political motivations of those forces. But in any reasonable world, this is stupid, because this is basically taking state money and using it to do things that could just as well have been done with non-state money.

You having fun yet?

Reti: Yeah. This is all fascinating. Seriously.

Nonresident Students

Blumenthal: The other aspect of funding streams had to do with nonresident students. Once we went over to a system where you eat what you catch, the motivations for the campuses suddenly became very, very different. Since this was happening at a time of severe financial crunch for the state, the response of campuses like Berkeley and UCLA and, to some extent, San Diego, was oh my goodness, let's just turn up, crank up the number of nonresident students, collect nonresident tuition, and that will be great for us. So they did. They raised their percentages of undergraduate nonresidents to the low to mid 20 percent levels and they collected a lot of money by doing so.

At the time, Santa Cruz's nonresident undergraduate student population was about 1 percent, maybe 2, well, 1.5 percent. We were down at that level when Berkeley was at 23 percent. So you could argue that as chancellor I should have turned up that crank faster than I did. But things change slowly. If we were Berkeley, we could turn that dial and get it to respond quickly. But we aren't Berkeley. We're Santa Cruz. We don't have the international or national reputation that a Berkeley or a UCLA has.

But we did decide to respond. I remember for years saying, "We've got to increase our number. It makes no sense. We've got to get to 10 percent. And then once we get to 10 percent, we should have a discussion about how high we want to go." That was my constant mantra on the subject.

Reti: And is that because of the kind of philosophical/political considerations of being a state of California institution founded to serve California students?

Blumenthal: Yes. I mean, I think we could easily argue—I certainly would argue—that at the 1 or 2 percent level, even if there was no money involved, we were too low. We had let that issue go. We hadn't been on top of it. I think our students deserve a more international student body that they can interact with. I think there's no question that we should have been at 10 percent all along, even if it hadn't brought us additional funding. I think that's a reasonable expectation for our California students.

I'm not above admitting that getting extra money is a good thing, though. That was also a motivation in this world. But of course, you can ask the question: how much is too much, and are campuses like UCLA and Berkeley overextending? They would argue, with some justification, that their nonresident student population actually supports California residents, that but for those students, they wouldn't be able to take the same number of California students that they do. In fact, financially, one nonresident student basically pays the extra money that we need for two resident students. So they would argue, and I think there's some real justification in that argument, that they can enroll as many Californians as they do only because they have those nonresident students. Now of course everyone looks at it and says 'Well, you've got only so many seats. You fill some seats with one type, then you can't get seats for the others. We'd have to leave seats empty because we can't afford to educate those students without that additional income.'

This issue started bubbling more and more, and we slowly started raising our nonresident student numbers. I think I saw the latest numbers coming in for next year: something like 11 percent. So we've gotten there. I have not initiated a campus discussion about whether 10 percent is enough, or how far we should go, because I'm now convinced that there's no question we need to go further. We can't be competitive if we stay at 10 percent. It just isn't realistic.

Reti: Competitive—

Blumenthal: With the other campuses. Davis is at 18 percent. Irvine's at 18 percent. We can't get there quickly. We're talking about a chunk of money here.

Reti: I can see the issue.

Blumenthal: So of course there's been political pushback on the UC system with regard to nonresident students. I think there's a lack of sophistication in the legislature in terms of understanding the financial need to admit nonresident students. Then it was all exacerbated by an earlier audit from the state. Our friendly state auditor, who I think is remarkably incompetent, did an audit on nonresident students at UC. This was an audit before the UCOP audit. This was a year or two earlier. It was a remarkably bad audit, and, I think, an intellectually dishonest audit because UC gave them every opportunity to understand the true financial situation with regard to nonresidents and they chose to ignore it and instead go for some political hit slogans in the release of their audit, which kind of feeds into the California thing about why should we spend California money to educate nonresidents. But in fact, as I'm telling you, there's a case to be made that nonresidents make it possible to educate as many Californians as we do.

Reti: So in terms of serving international students, what does it mean to be bringing in students with very different kinds of backgrounds and skills?

Blumenthal: I think that hasn't been considered as seriously as one might expect. But remember, the UC rules are such that we can only admit nonresident students if they exceed the average preparation of our resident students. And all nonresident students have to pass an English exam. I fully understand it doesn't guarantee anything. But it does establish some basis to believe these are strong students. Our nonresident students

actually do extremely well when they arrive at the university. By that measure in many ways, they outperform our California students.

So the audit was a huge problem because then there were calls in the state to limit nonresident students to 10 percent, 15 percent, which would have been devastating to Berkeley and UCLA. The regents started proposing some policies that the regents would adopt in the face of the political pressure. One of the early proposals was to limit the UC system to 15 percent on average, which alarmed me because I knew if they limited us up to an average for the system, guess where most of those students would be and where they wouldn't be.

So I volunteered to go to UCLA so that Gene Block²⁵⁴ and I could meet with a whole bunch of regents who were visiting UCLA. I decided to become the advocate for not doing this and for keeping the regents' hands off of UCLA and Berkeley. I was defending UCLA and Berkeley, but I also knew that by doing that, I was actually advantaging my own campus. I was motivated both by a local desire to help Santa Cruz, but also by a desire to help the UC system.

So we made the case for limiting the response to this audit. But the political pressures kept rising and the regents really wanted to do something to limit it. A bunch of proposals kept being floated and we kept putting them down. Finally a proposal was made which troubled me immensely—and it was ultimately adopted—to limit the UC system to 18 percent on any given campus of nonresident students and to grandfather in the higher percentages that were already at Berkeley, San Diego, and Los Angeles. But keep all of the other campuses to 18 percent.

I was very upset about that despite the fact that I knew that this 18 percent solution wouldn't affect Santa Cruz anytime soon. I'd love it if it affected us because that would

have meant that we'd gotten to 18 percent and were worried about it. As I say, by struggling and working, we've reached 11 percent of our incoming class being nonresidents. But we're still a long way away from the UC average. By the way, we're way ahead of Riverside in this regard, but we're still behind Santa Barbara, and definitely behind Irvine and Davis. Anyway, I had some real problems with this, because it was the first time that the regents, in their history, had ever adopted a policy that explicitly differentiated among campuses. It's the only regent policy that explicitly differentiated among campuses and created haves and have-nots.

Reti: So were you concerned about this being a precedent in and of itself?

Blumenthal: Yes. I was concerned about that precedent and I was concerned that they had done something which was disadvantaging a certain subset of the campuses. This was just not the way to do regental policy. I pushed really hard on that. I argued with a bunch of regents about that and I ultimately failed to get them to change their mind. The political forces were too strong. I did get them to do two things. One was to limit this policy to four years, so they would revisit it in four years. The second thing I got them to do was to admit in the policy that they were differentiating among the campuses. I figured if they were going to do something bad, they ought to at least admit that they're doing it. That's all I was able to accomplish. The four-year limit, I think, being the most important. My hope being that in four years, which will now be in a year or two, that saner heads will prevail. Will saner heads prevail? I don't think so, because the legislature has asked the university to come up with a financial plan for how we could cut back to no more than 10 percent nonresident students on any campus and of course UCOP will submit a plan, as well as a cost for such a plan. My fear is that the legislature will say, "Do it, but we're not going to give you the money."

So that is basically the story on nonresident tuition.

Reti: I had no idea there was so much to it.

The Departure of UC President Robert Dynes

Reti: Today is February 12, 2019. This is Irene Reti with Chancellor George Blumenthal. This is the twenty-third interview of the oral history that we're doing together.

Blumenthal: Great. And somehow I hope we finish before the year 2040.

The next thing to discuss is the departure of Bob Dynes. Ultimately, Dynes's departure was motivated by Compensation Gate, the scandal which I mentioned earlier about compensation within the UC system. But I want to just put it in a little perspective. Dynes, in many ways, was a good president. He accomplished a great deal. He made an agreement with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on the budget. When state funding didn't come through for UC, he had the toughness to reduce enrollments and force the legislature to, at the very last minute, add money to the UC budget. He really was committed to the One University concept. The Power and Promise of Ten was kind of his creation. He did many important things that benefited the system and frankly benefited this campus.

But things were getting increasingly sticky for him. And at a certain point, the Office of the President, in consultation with the then-chair of the regents, Dick Blum, agreed to bring in a group called the Monitor Group to do an assessment of the Office of the President and how it could work better. It was described at great length in the Council of Chancellors. I remember even in the Council of Chancellors, I kept questioning what it was that they were trying to accomplish because it soon became clear that the idea for this report was really from the regents, primarily Dick Blum, who wanted us to be much, much

more efficient. Blum believed in it. He called individual chancellors. He even called me and said, “You need to be more efficient in your processes.”

Well in fact, Santa Cruz had actually led the way during M.R.C. Greenwood’s time, when she had brought in an outside group to assess ways that we could be more efficient in the way that the university operated. And they made, at the time, a number of major changes. They consolidated all of the steno pools into just a couple of central resources. They changed the way IT is delivered—services from IT are delivered to the campus—to centralize that. There was a lot of centralization of purchasing. There were a lot of things that were done which ultimately would save money for the campus. It took investment; so yes, you had to invest. Realistically, in truth, I’m not sure if money was saved. But I think what happened was, because of those investments, there was not growth in the costs, which otherwise would have taken place. So these were very wise choices. It was M.R.C. and John Simpson who really did that when they were in charge here. They were way ahead of the other campuses.

So when Dick started bugging me about it, my general reaction was: been there, done that. But that was one of the bees in his bonnet when he was chair. Of course, he was also concerned about Compensation Gate. And I think the Monitor report, at least as it was originally presented, was a way to make the university more efficient by looking at what the Office of the President does, looking at what the campuses do, and figuring out how to do it all better.

I was pushing back on the Monitor report because I didn’t feel at the time that it had a clear enough mandate for what the Monitor Group was supposed to do. I felt it was a little wishy washy and unclear. It was clear that it was being driven by Dick. But it was also

clear that Bob Dynes had bought into it and was pushing it at the Council of Chancellors. So it was going to happen.

So they did this study of the university. The Monitor Group went and visited all ten campuses. I think we may have been the last campus they visited. I remember when the Monitor Group came. I did know one guy in the group, Bob Grey, who was then retired as the provost at Davis. He had joined the Monitor Group and he was one of the people who visited the campus. But there was a whole group of them. I was scheduled to meet with them first thing in the morning and at the end of the day of their visit. So for my first thing in the morning meeting, I decided to bring up issues that I thought I would rather uniquely bring up with them because I figured if we're the last campus, they've heard it all. I don't need to repeat what they've heard a million times before. But, maybe what I could add to the conversation is my perspective as senate chair. I wanted to be a little bit different.

It turned out it was a good discussion with them. They were very grateful for some of the issues that I raised and it felt like a good discussion. So we parted company and they went off to interview vice chancellors and deans and whomever else they were interviewing.

I was doing an interview at the end of the day with them as well. So they came to see me and we had this most surreal conversation, where they walked into my office and said, "Well, we've talked to all of the other campuses now and all of the other chancellors. And there's a growing consensus that Bob Dynes should be relieved of duty and fired. Do you agree with that?"

I was completely taken aback. I basically responded by saying that I thought that such a conclusion was outside of the scope of their duties and outside of the scope of the study that they were intending to do. And because of that, I wasn't going to respond to their

question and that I thought it was irresponsible to go outside of the scope. If this was going to be a witch hunt, we should label it a witch hunt. But if this was going to be a study of efficiency, then we should do a study of efficiency. I was also displeased because I thought they were asking me leading questions. We had a somewhat acrimonious conversation because I refused to budge from my position, which was that I wasn't willing to even go there. So ultimately, the meeting ended with some considerable bad taste in my mouth.

Reti: So wait, let me just ask you—the reason that all these other chancellors thought that he should be relieved of duty had to do with Compensation Gate?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Sort of. I was never convinced that the other chancellors had quite the view the Monitor Group attributed to them (and in one case I was sure it was not). Basically, the outcome of Compensation Gate was that he was ultimately responsible, that the university had lost the aura as a result of that, and that he's got to go. Bring somebody else in. It was a little bit complicated by the fact that because of Compensation Gate, the regents were starting to remove power from the president. They were undelegating things to him that had previously been delegated, so more and more things needed regental approval. That was a trend that started and went on for about a year, where the regents took more and more things back from the president. It was clear that this was going on. At some level, the regents had to take control of Compensation Gate, just like a couple years ago, the regents had to take control after Survey Gate. So it's not surprising that they did it, but they seemed to be on a mission to do it a lot. It was getting on the nerves of the chancellors, to some extent, because it meant that we had much less freedom to do things. Usually things are delegated to the president, who delegates them to us. So the campuses were having far less autonomy. I'm sure that was one of the factors as well, for my colleagues.

Anyway, I just wouldn't go there. And then, a short time thereafter, like the next week, I was in San Diego for the Leadership Academy. In those years, the University of California system put on a leadership academy for rising leaders. I know Alison Galloway went to it one year, for example. They did it for a number of years. They stopped doing it ten, twelve years ago. That year I was asked to come and give some lectures on shared governance. So I came down to the Leadership Academy. Bob Dynes was there—he was also giving some lectures—as was Bruce Darling. At lunchtime, I found myself sitting with Bob and Bruce at a table. So I relayed to Bob what had happened on campus. I was trying to warn him that the Monitor Group was out to get him and that he needed to be aware, He needed to be watching his back. He just didn't take it seriously. I mean, I couldn't believe it. He just didn't take it seriously. Maybe he'd already made up his mind to resign. I don't know. It was also awkward because Bruce Darling was sitting there. I think Bruce was secretly hoping that Bob would step away. I think Bruce was secretly hoping that the regents would turn to him. But I don't know. I don't necessarily know what happened. I felt a certain loyalty to Dynes, and that since I felt that the process that was going on was inappropriate, I felt it was the right thing for me to do to inform him. Maybe I should have done it privately. I don't know. But I did what I did and he did not seem to take it seriously.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the search for a new UCSC chancellor and a search for a new UCLA chancellor, and I think a search for a new UC Riverside chancellor, were going on. The UCLA one finished first and they hired Gene Block. At that point, the Santa Cruz one was well along. The Riverside one was just getting started. And Dynes announced that he was going to step down as president. It was a sudden announcement, unexpected for most people. Although a lot of people were calling for his resignation, it did come out of the blue. I was very upset afterwards because I spoke with Alberto Pimentel, who was the president of the search firm who was doing the Santa Cruz search. I think we had

scheduled interviews, or he had scheduled interviews, and I was one of the interviewees. And he said, “There’s a chance that the search may be scotched.” I said, “What do you mean? Dynes is going to be in office for several months. There’s plenty of time to finish the search.” He said, “Yeah, but as soon as he announced that he was stepping down, one person for sure, and maybe a couple more, are maybe dropping out of the candidate pool. And we can’t do the search if we don’t have enough candidates.” So I ended up sweating it because not only was I nervous about the interview, I didn’t even know if the interview was going to happen, because of the danger that candidates would be dropping out.

So the announcement kind of came at a bad time. I assume it had a similar effect in the Riverside case, although frankly they hired, or he hired, Tim White.²⁵⁵ I think Tim was a fantastic hire for Riverside. Tim went on to become the chancellor of the CSU system.

Ultimately, we got through all of that. I don’t think there’s any question that Bob’s departure was due to Dick Blum. Somehow once he lost Dick’s confidence, it was all over. Dick had a level of influence at that time with the regents that kind of ensured that. So that’s Dynes’ departure. He left when they hired Yudof.

President Mark Yudof

So now let me talk about Yudof’s hiring. They did a search for a new president. And oh, God, I don’t even know how to begin. It was a very questionable process. The regents, in doing the search for Dynes’ replacement, the regents violated their own policies on searches for presidents. I think that’s simply a statement of fact. Now why do I even know much about it? I talked to the guy—I don’t even remember who it was now—who was the head of the search firm. He called me a couple of times and I had a couple of conversations with him about the president search. I wasn’t heavily involved myself in any way, but I did talk a lot with Michael Brown. So let me remind you that Michael was the chair of

BOARS, the admissions committee. I really pushed hard to get him that chairship. He served on the academic council when I was chair. Then a couple of years later, he was elected to be vice chair and then chair of the Academic Senate. And it was just Michael's luck that he became chair of the senate as the search was getting underway.

Michael and I are good friends, and from the time I was appointed chancellor, he and I would talk at least once a week. I'd often call him as I was driving up to campus and we'd have a conversation. I used him as one of my sounding boards on issues. I really trust Michael's judgment, so I talked to him a lot. It was soon clear that this search was going in a very bad way. Dick was getting in his airplane and flying around the country personally interviewing people who he thought might make a good UC president. He was going completely out of process. He was not respecting the search committee that the regents had set up, nor the search process that the regents had set up. A part of the search process is that there is a faculty advisory group consisting of one member from each campus. I believe the Santa Cruz representative was Peggy Delaney.²⁵⁶ I know San Francisco's representative was Larry Pitts. I think I knew a couple of the other members of the group. And the chair and vice-chair of the senate were on it, and Michael Brown and Mary Croughan.

Very soon it became clear that they were not being allowed to do their work. Normally the faculty advisory group would look at files and help sift through and identify potential candidates. Dick was going around them. He was basically trying to arrange interviews prior to the review by the faculty group. And the faculty group was also not being allowed access to the regent search committee meetings, so even Michael could not attend those meetings. He himself was kept out of the process.

This caused a lot of consternation within the faculty group. It just so happened that one day at a regents meeting in San Francisco, I happened to be wandering around and I ran into Peggy and Larry. I asked them what they were doing there. They said, "Oh, we're having a meeting of the faculty group." They asked me to join them for lunch. So I actually had lunch with the faculty advisory group. I knew several of the people that were in the room. They revealed nothing confidential, but it was soon clear they were really unhappy.

Reti: So they were aware of what was going on.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. They were aware of what was going on and they were very unhappy. They felt like they had been left out of the process. I heard a lot of stuff from them about how bad it was.

Sometime after that meeting, the faculty group decided that they would all resign and that they would go to the newspapers with the story of what was happening, and how out of process that was. It fell to Michael to try to decide what to do. He was the leader of the faculty group. He was also the representative to the regents and he did confront Dick with the likelihood that there was going to be a rebellion. As a result of his conversations with Dick, Michael persuaded the faculty group not to resign. As you might imagine, Michael and I had a whole bunch of conversations around this time.

Reti: The regents were aware of what Blum was doing?

Blumenthal: Yes, they were and some of them were offended. But he was a colleague, and they were remarkably tolerant. When Dick stepped down as chair, sometime later, the next year or two years or whatever it was, at the regents dinner they had a little ceremony when he stepped down. People said nice things about him. I remember Sherry Lansing getting up and talking about Dick's chairship. She clearly alluded to all of this,

but she wasn't on the warpath about it. She made it more into a joke than into a serious issue. But from my perspective, this was a really serious issue.

So I'd like to put a pin there for just a minute and jump forward, probably around ten years, to a year and a half ago when Michael was appointed the provost of the university. I was on the search committee for the provost of the university. One of the first things I did was call Michael to encourage him to be a candidate. Michael was very reluctant to apply for a bunch of reasons. He didn't think he would get it. He wasn't sure he wanted to move to Oakland. He had family commitments in Santa Barbara. He was not unhappy with his current job. He had lots of reasons not to do it. I really worked on him, and ultimately, he made a decision not to apply.

When I learned that, I mentioned that to the committee. The committee had met and we had put up together a list of people who we would talk to. And basically, the committee said to me, "You go back to him and make him change his mind."

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: So I went back to Michael. Well, it turns out the committee included the then-chair of the senate, Jim Chalfont. And it also included the then-vice chancellor for student affairs at Irvine, who it turns out knew Michael very well. They'd gone to school together. People really pushed me to work on him. So I did. I finally got him to apply. And when we did the interviews for that position, Michael stood out, heads and shoulders, as the best candidate. It wasn't even close. Yes, I'm biased. I know I'm biased, but it wasn't even close. Janet Napolitano told us to give her two candidates to interview. And we did. But the other one, although she was quite good, I think she was perfectly decent, good candidate, but she was heads and shoulders below Michael. So there was an obvious choice at that point.

But, when the appointment came to the regents, it was not immediately approved. I heard about this only after the session. I wasn't at the regents-only session where they did this. But I heard right afterwards from my sources, who will remain anonymous, that Dick Blum had raised objections to Michael's appointment on the grounds that Michael had violated confidentiality and gone to the press during the Yudof search, which I knew was not true. When I heard that, I was very upset. So I went to Seth Grossman,²⁵⁷ who was Janet's chief of staff. I think I talked to Janet as well briefly, but I didn't have a chance to talk to her in detail. But I talked to Seth and I told Seth that I was confident that that accusation against Michael was wrong, and that there was an easy test, that we only needed to do a Google search and see whether or not there's any stories. Because there were no stories about Yudof until the appointment happened. It was kept completely secret. I presume that they did that because the next day Janet came back and said she really wanted this appointment and it was made. I'm still a little annoyed at what Dick did at that meeting.

So anyway, so now we can go back to Yudof. I guess there was a regents meeting; he was appointed. They arranged for the chancellors to meet with Mark. So we all waited in a room till he came in and we did have a chance to meet with him. It was nice enough. It was hard to get an impression of Mark. Mark is not one of these people who sucks the air out of the room when he walks in. Some people do that. He's not that guy. But he's very, very smart. Mark is short and somewhat roly-poly, but I always think of him symbolically as this huge head on a tiny body, because he's so smart.

So it was fine. After that meeting, I happened to be in that hallway, and Dick came over to me and said, "People are saying that I violated process here. I just want you to know, we did everything absolutely right. There was nothing wrong with the way we did this appointment." He's going on and on with me.

So first of all, why me? And what difference does it make at this point? I just listened to him. There was no point engaging him in dispute, but I was just kind of astonished that he would even have that conversation. He must have known that I'm closely associated with the senate people, so I'd probably heard all about it. But Jesus, I mean, I'm not—who cares what I think? But anyway, it was a very surreal conversation.

The day after the appointment, it was arranged for Kelly and me to have dinner with Mark and his wife Judy. So we went to some restaurant in San Francisco and we had a very, very pleasant dinner together. I think Kelly and Judy liked each other. Mark is an interesting man. Mark was joking; he said he had tried to hire Kelly years ago at Texas, the law school. I know she applied at Texas. I didn't remember that she actually got an offer, but I know she applied there for a law school faculty position, and he remembered her.

What I was struck by at that dinner, my biggest takeaway, was that I was shocked that Mark was unaware that labor negotiations involving UC are all conducted by the Office of the President. It's the president that's in charge of all labor negotiation. It's not the chancellors. He didn't know that. I was explaining that to him and his reaction was, no big deal. He said, "Come on," he said, "I grew up in Philadelphia. My father was an electrician, and he was a bigwig in the Electricians' Union. I've been around union people all my life. I've dealt with unions in Minnesota and in Texas. This is just one more thing to do."

I said, "Mark, this isn't Texas anymore. California's a little different than Texas." (laughs)

To his credit, later on he told me, "Yes, I see what you meant at that dinner." I think the unions were very in his face all the time while he was president. This is not Texas; it isn't

Minnesota. That was the main thing I remember: that he was unaware of that the responsibilities of labor negotiations.

But Mark came in and he took the reins.

Reti: At this dinner that you were having, did he seem to have any familiarity with the Santa Cruz campus? What did he know about it, if anything?

Blumenthal: He knew a little bit about the Santa Cruz campus. You have to understand his sense of humor was a little wry at times. He basically called it the communist campus.

Reti: (laughs) Okay.

Blumenthal: We were weird and leftist, and that's all he knew.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: Mark had been leading an annual trip for years to Israel in the summertime, taking a bunch of university presidents and their spouses to Israel. He'd been doing that for a number of years through an organization, I think called the AJC, American Jewish Council. So he asked Kelly and me if we wanted to join him on his next trip. And I, of course, explained to him that I'd been there before. But that didn't seem to bother him.

So we agreed to go to Israel with this group, which was a very interesting trip. It was interesting in a number of regards. One is, I got to meet a whole bunch of university presidents and their spouses. We spent, I don't know, a week or ten days or whatever it was together. It was a great opportunity to really get to know other university leaders. A couple of them have gone on to be major presidencies of major universities. So it was, and there were people who were nice. I met the guy who was the president of San Francisco

State. I really liked him. He and I became friends on that trip. And also, Michael Drake and Brenda Drake were on the trip. He was then the chancellor of Irvine. Michael and I had been friends, but this was an opportunity for Kelly and Brenda to become friends. Brenda and Kelly are both graduates of Boalt Law School [now renamed Berkeley Law], Brenda a couple of years earlier than Kelly, so they have a lot of shared experiences to talk about.

So it was a very nice trip. We got there and one of the first places they took us was this hall in Tel Aviv when Ben Gurion in 1948 declared independence. I think it's called Independence Hall. So we went in there and we sat in the seats in this little audience, looking at the stage where they actually did the radio broadcast declaring independence. It was very moving.

And all of a sudden, Kelly taps me on the shoulder, and says, "Turn around." And I turn around, and there's five students wearing banana slug t-shirts. So I turn around and it was five of our students were taking a tour of Israel, and they happened to be there at exactly the same time.

Reti: Did they recognize you?

Blumenthal: Well, they only saw the back of my head. I don't think they did. I think it was Kelly that kind of brought us together.

So it was actually quite an interesting visit. They took us around the country. We met with a lot of higher education leaders. (laughs) One of them was the president of Hebrew University, who I had met maybe ten years earlier. Ten years earlier when I was on sabbatical, my friend Avishai Dekel²⁵⁸ asked me if I would mind meeting with the president of the university. I said sure, what for? He said, "Well, they were starting at Hebrew University a new engineering program. And since I'd been heavily involved in the

start of the UCSC engineering program, the president wanted to talk to me about the experience.” So I agreed. I went and had a meeting with the president. It was all very pleasant and nice, and I came away with a very positive impression of him. He seemed like a really smart guy and doing really good work.

So ten years later, we met as a group. All of the presidents on this visit met with the same president, who was then at the end of his second term as president of Hebrew University. Of course, I greeted him warmly, thinking he wouldn’t remember me, but he of course remembered me precisely. The next day I saw Avishai, my friend, and I said, “I’m so impressed that he remembered me.” He said, “He better have remembered you because the day before, I told him you were coming.” (laughter)

I think it was during that visit that Yudof and the Hebrew University president had this extensive discussion about the Education Aboard Program. Earlier, during my sabbatical in Israel, the State Department had re-rated Israel as a dangerous place, and that automatically triggered a decision by Education Abroad to remove Israel as one of their locations for the education abroad program. That annoyed the Israelis, as you might imagine.

So the Hebrew University president brought that up with Yudof and I think ultimately Yudof changed the rule so that Israel could be an EAP destination again.

So it was, overall, a good trip. And for me, the big issue on the trip, the thing that I most valued, was the opportunity to interact with the other university presidents. The trip that we were on, it was led by Mark, and Judy, and by Mary Sue Coleman,²⁵⁹ who was then the president of the University of Michigan, and her husband. Mary Sue is now the president of the AAU.

Reti: So you got to meet your cohort, or part of your cohort.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Oh, the other thing. Our cousins in the Minneapolis area had met Mark when he was the president of University of Minnesota. And what they told me was he was a real connoisseur of pancakes. So when we were at one hotel, we had breakfast with Mark and Judy. And in Israel, they usually have buffets for breakfast. I remember at one point I got some food and came back to the table. Everybody was eating. I looked at Mark and I said, “Mark, I’m astonished you’re not having any pancakes.”

He said, “They have pancakes?” He was really excited. So he went over to get some pancakes. He came back and he says, “You call *those* pancakes?” He said, “They’re not fit to eat.”

Mark had come from the University of Texas system, where he was president. The University of Texas system is very different from UC in that there isn’t even a modicum of belief that the campuses are all at the same level. Within the UC system, I’m not arguing that Santa Cruz is as good as Berkeley and UCLA, but I would argue that we adhere to the same standards as Berkeley and UCLA, that we strive to be as good as or better than those campuses, and that we’ve got a shot of doing it. I won’t say there’s nothing preventing us—there are some things that prevent us—but we have our fate, to some extent, in our own hands. As a campus, we can be as good as any other UC campus because we have the same standards, and basically the same level of funding, at least, after rebenching. So my view had always been that the campuses needed to be the same.

So on that trip, I think I’ve alluded to it before, I talked to Mark a lot about rebenching ideas, which he completely rejected because of his belief that the Texas system was a perfectly good system, among other things. I know that Mark evolved a lot over the next year or so in his thinking about UC. I want to credit Mary Croughan for a lot of that. Mary succeeded Michael Brown as chair of the Academic Senate and she and Mark became good

friends. They interacted a lot. I saw a developing change in Mark as he continued his interactions with Mary, so I credit her with a lot of the changes that I saw with Mark over the next few years. She really did a lot for him, and I want to acknowledge that.

With Mark's arrival, it also gave me an opportunity to do one thing differently. When I started as chancellor, at the Council of Chancellors meeting, we would sit around this table in the president's conference room. No chancellor would have a computer or an iPad or anything like that there. What they had was a little pad of paper, sort of half the size of a tablet, a little pad of paper with a pencil. Literally, a pencil—I don't use pencils anymore, I always use a pen—but with a pencil, so people could take a note. That was all there was there. Nobody used a computer or anything like that. So while Dynes was president, I would sit there and I would take notes on this little pad of paper, these relatively small pieces of paper. I don't write real well. I don't write much anymore. I haven't for twenty years. So that was a real chore for me to take written notes. I would come back from a Council of Chancellors meeting with this big sheaf of papers, and I would give them to Maurene [Catto], who was then my administrative assistant, and I'd ask her to type them up. It was for her a horrible chore because half the time she couldn't read my handwriting. And when I take notes, I often use shortcuts, particularly mathematical shortcuts. So before she was done, she learned a lot of mathematical symbols. It was really awkward and it's frustrating to go through a step where somebody has to type your stuff.

Anyway, so when Yudof became president, at his first meeting of the Council of Chancellors, I decided that I was going to break the mold. So I walked in there with my laptop and I just opened it up like I'd been doing it all my life, plugged it in, and started typing away. Nobody said a word. So I just did it.

Reti: Did other people start bringing their laptops?

Blumenthal: Well, eventually. It took a few meetings before anybody copied me, but eventually the others started doing it as well. I think Mark once, maybe a year later, made some comment to me about all that I was writing down at these meetings. But I don't think he really cared. I just decided to push the envelope and see what happened.

When Mark arrived, Rory Hume very quickly departed. I don't know everything that went on there. I liked Rory. I think I mentioned in an earlier session that Rory and I tended to agree on issues a lot. His basic view of the university was very similar to mine. So I really appreciated his presence. But Rory had kind of been a candidate for president, and kind of been a candidate for chancellor of UCLA. Those searches were going on at the same time. He never clearly indicated what he wanted to do, and so he got neither. I think Rory was a very talented guy. I never really had a conversation with Rory about this. But right after Yudof was appointed, Rory resigned and took a presidency at like the University of Saudi Arabia, or one of the big Middle East universities. He was probably paid a fortune to do it. So Yudof was left without a provost almost from the beginning and he wasn't happy about it. He did say something about how disappointed he was. He wanted Rory to stay for at least a year and Rory didn't. He was gone almost immediately.

Mark looked around and very quickly hired Bob Grey, the same Bob Grey who had been the provost at Davis. Bob became the acting provost.²⁶⁰ I liked Grey in that role. I had reservations about him beforehand, but in that role I really thought he did a good job. I tended to agree with him. I thought he brought sensibleness to the position. I was very pleased with his performance as provost. I have a sense that something happened between him and Yudof. I don't know what—this must have been a year in, or eight months into his acting provostship. It was before they'd really begun a search. Something happened and he quit. I sought him out and met with him to try and encourage him to stay, because

I really thought he was doing a good job. And he was not budgeable. He had made a decision and he was sticking to it to get the hell out of Dodge.

So now the university was without a provost. Clearly Mark had to find somebody else to do this, and do it fast. Typically, a Council of Chancellors meeting, which usually is on the first Wednesday of the month, typically what I would do, literally throughout my chancellorship, is I would go up the day before and stay at the Marriott across the street from the Office of the President. Usually I would have dinner with the chair and vice chair of the senate. I've done that for virtually all the years I've been chancellor. So it was the night before the CoC meeting, I think. I guess I must have just come back from dinner and somewhat to my surprise, or maybe I shouldn't have been surprised, when I came back to the hotel, there in the lobby sitting there reading something was John Sanford. Sanford was from UCLA. He was the chief of staff for the first two or three years to Mark Yudof. Yudof had brought him up from UCLA almost immediately to be his chief of staff, so Sanford was doing that role. And he was sitting in the hotel lobby reading something or doing something. He was in the lobby when I came back from dinner. So I stopped by and said hello to him. He asked me to sit down, and we chatted for a few minutes. And he said that it was really urgent to get a new provost, a new acting provost and they had two candidates. It turns out I knew them both and I think very, very highly of both of them. But I didn't think they would be a good fit for the provost of UC at that particular point in time. I didn't think one of them would do it, but even if he would do it, I didn't think he was the right choice for that moment. The other one I didn't think was the right choice for Mark. It was somebody who was smart, was good enough to be the provost, but would not intellectually engage with Mark the way Mark would want somebody to intellectually engage with him.

So I said to John, "Well, what about Larry Pitts?"

He said, “Who’s Larry Pitts?”

I explained to him who Larry Pitts was. He said, “Well, that’s interesting. I’ll see what Mark thinks.”

I called Larry to warn him that I’d used his name in vain and I didn’t know if anything would come of it, but that I had put his name in the hopper.

And then, I think a day later, after CoC I got a call from Mark asking me: who’s this Larry Pitts guy and why am I recommending him. So I explained to him who Larry was and what he had done. I said to him, “Mark, I think you should interview all the people you were going to interview, but I’ll tell you this. The one who’s going to be more intellectually engaging for you, the one who you’ll find much more interesting, and willing to challenge you and have many more ideas, is Larry.”

To his credit, Mark called me back a few days later and said, “You were right.” So he ended up hiring Larry as the acting provost. I think they later made it regular provost. But Larry decided that he was not going to do this for more than four years. Larry had retired. He’d been a neurosurgeon at UCSF. He’d made the decision to retire. So when he came back as provost, it was really out of retirement. They had to un-retire him to do that. He said four years and he stuck to it.

So I guess this is jumping ahead. Maybe I’ll do it now if you don’t mind. It’s not in the notes. I was in Hawaii. We’re jumping way forward to a whole other thing. I was in Hawaii for the World Economic Summit —I think the G8. There was some summit there, and all the world leaders were coming. And why was I there? I was there because the governor of Hawaii was doing a reception for the thirty-meter telescope. And since I was at the time the chair of the Keck Observatory board, it was thought that I should probably be there as well.

Reti: I see.

Blumenthal: Henry Yang was also there, because he was the chair of the TMT board. And in fact, I stayed at the same hotel as Barack Obama. I thought it would be really kind of cool if I'd run into him at the gym or something. Anyway, I remember going to the reception at the governor's house. It was really a great reception. I was so impressed. Senator Inouye was there, Dan Inouye.²⁶¹ It turned out that a group was going to go to another event that Inouye was hosting. So I went along to that event as well. Going back to the hotel, which was on Waikiki Beach, was just a huge pain. From the governor's mansion, or from wherever this other reception was, back to the hotel, was maybe a fifteen-minute drive. It took me like three or four hours, because they were literally searching every car that went out to Waikiki Beach. Because the president was visiting, they literally stopped every car. They looked in the trunk. That's what you had to do to get back to the hotel.

So anyway, so the next morning—I don't remember what I had to do that day—but I had some time. I'm not sure what my first scheduled thing was, but it wasn't real early. But I got a call from Henry Yang and he said he wanted to talk to me. I said fine. I said, "Where do you want to meet?"

He said, "Don't worry. I'm just down the block. I'm at a different hotel. I'll come to your hotel." I said fine. So I waited and waited and waited. Henry never showed up. It turned out he couldn't get to my hotel. (laughs) They wouldn't let him in because he wasn't staying there.

So we finally figured out a way to meet. I met with Henry. Henry was an emissary from Yudof. Henry said that Yudof wants me to consider being provost. They hadn't done their search yet. They were just forming a search committee, but Henry said he wanted me to

consider this. We talked about it a little bit. And Henry was in an awkward position because he's a friend. He was doing Yudof's bidding. On the other hand, I'm not sure Henry completely agreed that this was a good idea. I kept trying to press him: "Do you think this is something I should do?" and he really never gave me a clear answer, which was fair. But in any event, Henry raised the issue with me. I thought about it and I talked to Kelly. For Kelly, this would have been a really convenient thing because then I would have been based in Oakland and she's based in San Francisco. On the other hand, I have to say, Kelly told me that I should do what was right, and what I felt was right for my career, and it would either fall into place or not in terms of our living arrangements.

This has got to be eight or nine years ago. I didn't much worry about it, because I wasn't going to put in my name. But then Yudof talked to me and said, "Well, I really want you to think about this. You don't have to do anything now, but just think about it." I said, "Well, I'll think about it." But I never put in an application.

So they did the search and since I hadn't applied, I figured this was over. Well, then Yudof calls me in one day to meet with him, and he says, "I'm offering you the job." I said, "How can you offer me the job? I haven't applied and I haven't been interviewed." He said, "Well, I know that. But everyone on the search committee knows you, so the search committee voted to recommend that you be hired after their interviews." He said, "Take a couple of weeks to think about it." But he really wanted me to do it. So now it was real.

Reti: Whoa. (laughs) It's like conscription or something.

Blumenthal: Right. So this became a difficult thing. There weren't that many people I could talk to about it. I think I talked to Ashish. I talked to, of course, Kelly at some length. I called Alberto Pimentel, who's the president of one of the search firms, and whom I have a lot of trust in. And I talked to Michael Brown. I talked to Larry Pitts. Larry was very clear

with me that he recommended that I not do it, which I really appreciated, because he was being unambiguous. And of course, if I took it, I would be succeeding him.

So at the end of the day, I basically said no. I don't think I was even close to saying yes, to be honest with you. I wanted to consider it. I wanted to try it on, like you try on a suit or something. But I just didn't see myself doing that and being happy in that role, particularly with Mark being the president. Mark was very hands-on and I thought there would be very little autonomy as a provost. It would be engaging. He would be open to being engaged on issues and arguing issues, and that would be fun for me, but I didn't think that I would be able to make my own mark as provost.

Reti: Wow. That's certainly a road not taken. And for the UCSC campus as well.

Blumenthal: I've never regretted that decision. Ultimately, he hired Aimeé Dorr to be the provost. But yeah, that was an interesting almost side road.

From my perspective, Mark did two huge things as president. I understand there were issues: there were issues about tuition increases; there were issues about lots of stuff going on at the time. Huge cuts—Mark was president when we went through the great recession. In one year, in just one year, the state cut the UC budget by an amount that's equal to the entire state support for UC Santa Cruz, UC Santa Barbara and UCLA. That was one year's cut to UC. That was huge. We had to live through that. But Mark handled it well. I mean, he did some things I didn't approve of. I guess an example which comes to mind was the furloughs. A decision was made to do furloughs. In previous times, we'd done temporary salary cuts to employees, but it was felt it would be fairer to do furloughs, so people didn't have to work for less money. Everyone was fine with it until one day I was talking to Yudof, and I had heard from the senate that the senate was going to raise the issue of, if we're furloughing faculty, should we also not be decreasing the amount of class time in our

courses. I still remember Mark's reaction to it when I told him that issue was about to come up. His reaction was, "Oy vey." (laughter)

So the issue did come up. We dealt with it in a conference call among the chancellors, including Mark and Larry Pitts. It was an interesting call because Larry Pitts and I advocated for decreasing the course time in proportion to salary. We felt that if staff were being cut back in their hours and everybody else was, then the same should be true of faculty, and that faculty's time should be cut equally everywhere, and therefore, they should teach fewer hours in the week.

On the other hand, Michael Drake was adamantly opposed to that. He was very afraid of the reaction of the public if we did that. It turns out that the CSU system did cut class time, and nobody complained about them.

But at the end of the day, Mark was persuaded. And frankly, of all of the others on the call, Larry and I were the only two people who advocated for cutting back on course hours. So it was decided to require the faculty to teach the full load.

Larry, it turns out, got into a little bit of trouble. He was in charge of writing the memo announcing this decision and he didn't write it carefully enough. He worded it in a way that he was heavily criticized. It was a mistake of wording and in fact, he was the guy who was actually advocating, along with me, for doing it a different way. But that's the way the world works.

But I wanted to say that Mark's two big major contributions to UC were, in my view, number one that he restored confidence of the regents and the president. The regents did have confidence in him. He was Dick Blum's guy. And Mark had an aura of utter competency and experience about him. As a result, over the next year or two, the regents

re-delegated all of the authorities they had taken back from the president. I thought that was an important, non-trivial thing to have happened.

In fact, during that time, the regents had taken on so many of the president's responsibilities that WASC decided to do review of UCOP and the regents. WASC is the accrediting agency in California and typically WASC will only review campuses, not systems. But they were so alarmed by the extent to which the regents were exercising executive authority that they did a review and they wrote a WASC report, on the regents. It infuriated Dick Blum. I was delighted by the report. I thought they were right on. I thought, for once WASC is doing something that's going to do us all some good. I was very, very pleased to see the WASC report come out. I think it was well worth reading, well worth acting on. I liked the fact that it was a public shaming of the regents.

But in truth, when Mark became president, it was really the strength of his personality, the trust that the regents had in him, and his professionalism that caused them to basically re-delegate authority.

And the other major accomplishment was that he took on this issue of the pension system. Probably around thirty years ago, the regents stopped contributions to the retirement system. The reason they stopped it was because the retirement system was so successful, it was funded at way over 100 percent funding. I don't remember what it was, 150, 250 percent. It was way, way over. The pension system was in danger of getting in trouble with the IRS, which has limits on how big a pension system can be. It sounds funny to say these things now, but that was the case then. So the pension system was way overfunded. The regents stopped all contributions, both from employees and from the regents, although the regents did institute a 2 percent contribution from the regents, to a defined contribution plan, CAP. So they did that. But basically no more money was going into the

retirement system. So it was inevitable that the fundedness of the retirement system would start to decrease. Nobody was surprised at that.

The university also did another thing which drained the retirement system and that was to have very early retirement programs. There were three VERIPs. The VERIPs basically were a financial inducement to older faculty to retire. One of the financial inducements was that they gave them additional service credit, which meant that they were getting more pension than they would otherwise have deserved upon retirement, and therefore it was a drain on the retirement system. So the university, in its infinite wisdom, was using the retirement system to relieve some of the economic pressures on the university. So they were doing that and then not doing contributions.

By the early 2000s, the Academic Senate was starting to get a little antsy, and was starting to recommend that the regents restart contributions to the retirement system. Back when I was chair of the senate in 2004 and '05, we strongly urged that contributions be restarted, in a very slow, gradual way. We got nowhere. Nobody was interested in taking that on because we were still over 100 percent funded. I don't know at that point what it was, but I'm guessing it was 110 percent. So we were still over, and nobody was worried about it. But I knew, and the senate people knew, that if we started slowly with contributions, we were not going to be at the breakeven point for a few years. So you need to start above 100 percent.

Well, Yudof was unfortunate enough to have two things happen at the same time. We were headed back toward 100 percent fundedness, and the stock market crashed and we went through the great recession. So one day the retirement system was—I don't know, I'm guessing, I'm making up the numbers—one day it was 105 percent funded, and a few weeks later it's at 80 percent. I think it ultimately went down to 69 percent at its low point,

69 percent funded. So we were desperately in need of an infusion of money into the retirement system. But there was a problem. One, we didn't have money. Our budgets were being cut. The state did not give us money for the retirement system, and yet we had to keep it afloat. So it was decided that we would have to restart contributions. I think the first thing that happened, which made a lot of sense, was that the university redirected its 2 percent from the CAP contribution to just going to UCRS. That should have happened years earlier, because it would have been so painless. But of course hindsight, etcetera, is always better.

Then we had to think about restarting contributions. That was a painful experience because it was clear, number one, that since the retirement system was already grossly underfunded, our contributions were going to have to be higher than steady state. And second, there was not going to be any corresponding pay increase to take care of that. In addition, the university was not going to get any additional money from the state to take care of that. And yet, it was the responsible thing to do. And Yudof did it. I think that that was exceptionally difficult. He was not shying away from it like other presidents had. I give him a lot of credit.

Then there was a discussion about putting in a different tier and making the retirement system a little bit more efficient. I think that's really when we went to tier two. So at that point, he appointed a task force on post-retirement benefits. I was actually on that task force as one of the members. The group split up into two pieces: a group that looked at pensions and a group that looked at retiree health. Retiree health was becoming a problem because of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. It's a paper problem, not a real problem, but people take it very seriously. UC has always funded retiree health, and funded it annually. So if it costs 30 million dollars, they take 30 million dollars out of their budget to pay for retiree health. That's how we've done it since time immemorial. But the Sarbanes-Oxley Act,

which passed in 2002, changed the ground rules. It requires the university, even though we pay it annually, to count it on our books as a debt. The amount of the debt is how much money we would have to have in the bank in order for the interest on that money to pay our annual costs. So suddenly, because of that act, UC was carrying a multi-billion dollar debt on their books because of the retiree health commitments. At some level, this is only an issue for the people with the visors who look at numbers. But at another level, people took it very, very seriously, because it goes to the bottom line of the university's financial page. So that was a big issue on one side.

The other issue was the pension. The pension group looked at their different pension options and eventually made some recommendations. And to be honest with you—and I was a member of the group, so I can admit this—our recommendations, in retrospect, were not good recommendations. It took a while for me to be convinced of that, but I was ultimately convinced of it. But fortunately, the Academic Senate, and I would credit Bob Anderson, who was then the chair of the senate, as well as the staff, I think CUCSA leadership, got together and they provided an alternative set of recommendations about the pension, independent of the task force. This was the so-called Plan C. I was actually in Yudof's office meeting with him the day he got Plan C. He was furious. He said, "I did this task force. I've gotten all these recommendations. I'm ready to act and now they're coming in with another plan? This is ridiculous." Well, the truth is ultimately Plan C that was proposed by the senate and the staff folks, was better, and he ultimately adopted it and it was adopted by the regents. So they did the right thing.

Reti: So can you give me a general sense of what you felt like wasn't a good recommendation and how that was countered?

Blumenthal: Those of us who'd been on the task force had tried to do a very fancy plan where Social Security was integrated with UCRS. I liked the idea, in concept, because since Social Security is out there, why not figure out a way to do this so that they're taking advantage of all the resources as you plan out people's retirement. So in that sense, it was a good idea.

On the other hand, and it took me a while to realize the weakness of this plan. It was actually Onuttom Narayan, on our campus, who convinced me I was wrong—he did ultimately convince me that to some extent, the plan would rob Peter to pay Paul in a way that wasn't equitable. He was right. It took me a while to see that and I think the committee as a whole never realized it.

But in any event, Yudof ultimately didn't choose that plan. He chose really what was the previous UCRS plan light, a slightly cheaper version of the previous plan. It saved a little money, but not a lot, and it was the wise choice for him to make. So I give him a lot of credit. To the extent that we're on a pathway to having a well-funded and stable retirement system, I think we owe a lot of credit to Yudof. Today, I think the retirement system may even be approaching 90 percent funded, and that's pretty good; certainly it's great in comparison to other retirement systems.

Reti: Right. I was thinking that at the time we're living in, there are so many pension systems that are in trouble, so that's reassuring.

Blumenthal: It's great in that regard. It still isn't 100 percent, which is what you really want. But still, I think it says something that we acted when we did. We should have acted earlier. But it could have been worse. We could have waited too long.

There's an issue here in that, since the restart of contributions, we have never gotten money from the state to pay the annual cost of the pension contributions for the

university. That's an issue. The CSU system and the community college system both get annual contributions from the state to pay their share of the contributions to the pension system. UC has never gotten that. The only thing we've gotten was, on a couple of occasions Governor Brown gave us an infusion of one-time money to put into the pension system. It wasn't a long-time commitment to pay for anything. It's just, "Your pension system's low, I'll give you some money to add to it." I'm not going to look a gift horse in the mouth. It was important, but it wasn't the same thing.

And there was a very dramatic regents meeting—I thought it was dramatic. I'll come back to regents stuff later. But Jerry, during his third term, religiously attended regents meetings. During one of those meetings, Hadi Makarechian,²⁶² who's one of the regents, called him on the issue of contributions to the pension system, and asked why it made sense for the state to make contributions to the CSU retirement system but not to the UC retirement system. Brown gave him a long answer that meandered all over the place but didn't answer his question. Hadi, bless his soul, said, "You have not answered my question. My question is, how can you justify this difference of behavior?"

And Brown said, "Well, that's what we call in my business a question." He never really gave a real answer to it. But I just loved the fact that Hadi called him on it because it was a very fair issue.

Anyway, those were the two major contributions of Mark Yudof during his term. I'm not saying he didn't do anything else. But from my perspective, those were the two big things that he did.

Reti: So that's a systemwide perspective. What about from the point of view of being chancellor of UCSC? What was your relationship like with Yudof and how do you feel that he supported this campus?

Blumenthal: I had a really good relationship with Mark. Mark and I hit it off. We both loved to argue about issues. I enjoyed Mark in many ways. He could be a little off-putting to people at times. He's not Mr. Warm and Fuzzy, by any stretch of the imagination. But I like Mark. I liked him very much, so I got along with him very well personally.

From a perspective of the campus, the big issue to me was rebenching. That was, to me, the biggest contribution.

I don't believe Mark ever came to the campus during his presidency. I know we arranged for it once, and then we canceled it because of demonstrations. So I don't think he ever came here. It didn't bother me particularly, especially since I was the one who cancelled the one visit that we had scheduled. But he never visited the campus. And you know, he would periodically refer to us as "the lefty campus," or whatever. He was not above just kind of giving me a hard time. And we never had a substantive discussion of what makes Santa Cruz so unique and wonderful. That's not a conversation I ever had with him. I don't remember going to Mark and saying, "We need X." I think he was supportive, but much of his term, there was just no money around, so there weren't a lot of things he could give us, per se.

Reti: This was not an era of expansion. This was an era of retrenchment.

Blumenthal: Yes, it was. And with issues like establishing the coastal campus, which probably happened during his time, I was on my own. This was not something that the system was going to help us with.

Reflections on President Clark Kerr and the History of UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Some people have said that after Clark Kerr was fired by Reagan, Santa Cruz never had a president who was as friendly, or as supportive, or whatever word you want to use—a champion of the campus.

Blumenthal: This is an interesting question you raise. If you don't mind my saying a few words about it—

Reti: Please.

Blumenthal: So I, unfortunately, never had the pleasure of meeting Clark Kerr.²⁶³

Reti: Really?

Blumenthal: Really. Which I truly regret.

Reti: I'm surprised.

Blumenthal: I know Bill Ladusaw knew him, and I know M.R.C. knew him. I know that when he wrote *The Gold and the Blue*, the chapter in his book about Santa Cruz,²⁶⁴ which is somewhat critical, in its original version was originally much more critical. And what I heard was that M.R.C., when she read a draft chapter, went ballistic and went up to see him and argued that he needed to change the chapter. That's what I heard. I never discussed it with her. I heard that from third parties, maybe from Bill; I don't remember from whom. But that's what I heard.

But, yeah, he was supportive, certainly of the original vision. And remember, he was college roommates with Dean McHenry, so it makes sense that he would be invested in the vision of the campus.

After him, it's interesting. I don't remember much about Charles Hitch.²⁶⁵ But I do remember when David Saxon was appointed president.²⁶⁶ David came and gave a talk to the Academic Senate. Right after he was appointed, he did a tour. I went to that senate meeting just because I wanted to hear him. I was struck by his talk. His message was succinct and clear. I'm sure he talked for a long time. But his message was basically, "I believe in excellence. I define excellence by Berkeley, and therefore I'm going to do everything I can to make the UC system excellent." That was pretty much his spiel at the senate meeting.

Reti: So essentially, we would all ride on Berkeley's coat tails, because we're associated with Berkeley?

Blumenthal: Oh, no. He wanted to achieve the level of excellence of Berkeley. I don't know necessarily that he was saying do it the same way. I'm not sure he was intolerant of doing it a different way. But I was kind of surprised that he would give that speech at Santa Cruz because it wasn't the kind of speech that you would expect to be well received here. Anyway, during his tenure, of course, was the time when applications to UCSC started declining rapidly. We were having real trouble filling our entering class. I had always thought that Saxon was not well disposed toward Santa Cruz. That was definitely my feeling at the time about Saxon. But when I talked years later to Larry Hershman, who was the vice-president of the university for budget, Larry said Santa Cruz had no stronger champion than David Saxon, that Saxon was really committed to Santa Cruz. Larry had been around for a long time, and he knew stuff, so I have no reason to disbelieve Larry. I think he must have known what he was talking about. But it was at such contrast to my impression of him.

The president that succeeded him was David Gardner.²⁶⁷ There was the scandal about the chancellor at Berkeley, Chancellor Tien,²⁶⁸ who's Asian American. And there was a regent who was appointed by one of the governors, who was also Asian American, but who was appointed by a Republican governor, and there was some question about whether he would be confirmed. So at a Council of Chancellors meeting, the president put a lot of pressure on Chancellor Tien to lobby legislators in favor of this regent. It just so happened, this was a Council of Chancellors meeting that was done through teleconference and somebody hacked in and recorded it and then released it to the newspapers. This became a huge scandal. I remember reading about it, because I was pretty offended by what was being published. But I also remember, for some reason I was over at University House for some event of some sort. I was talking to Karl Pister, who was then the chancellor. Karl was irate that anyone could hack in and do that. He was furious. He thought they should be sent to jail. So it may well be true. On the other hand, I kept trying to say to him that I was also irate at the content. He wasn't going there. I remember we had a little bit of a disjuncture in that conversation. Anyway, sorry, I got off topic.

Reti: I was asking about presidents of the University of California in relation to UC Santa Cruz. In general, as the campus began to shift towards becoming more of a research university, especially under Chancellor Greenwood, did the attitude from the Office of the President toward the campus shift in turn? Or are we sort of in a little time capsule, being seen as the communist campus? And we'll never shed that identity for all time. I just wondered—since you have spent time extensively at systemwide, and with the regents, and with presidents—what your general sense is of the image of Santa Cruz at the Office of the President?

Blumenthal: I think our image has changed. I think there's a greater recognition of excellence at the campus. I don't think there's any question about that. I think we're

regarded as a more excellent campus than we used to be. I did tell you about Yudof kidding me a lot. But it was really Yudof kidding me a lot. It wasn't necessarily his view of the campus.

When Dick Atkinson²⁶⁹ became president and appointed M.R.C, I mean, M.R.C. was not somebody who you could take lightly. The campus got taken a lot more seriously once M.R.C. was here as chancellor.

I think I talked about the space crunch on campus, how we didn't have enough space, and how it became a big controversy. Well, I also know that Dick, after making a commitment to M.R.C. that all campuses would get to 80 percent of the space needs, went around making statements like, "Oh, that's overly generous" and stuff like that. He just didn't take it seriously as I thought he should have. I know it was important to M.R.C. and if the chancellor thought it was important, I thought he should think it was important.

Bob Dynes was fine.²⁷⁰ I think Bob really wanted all of the campuses to be meshed together and have this great, powerful, ten-campus university. Mark was much less of a ten campuses president—he was about a confederation of ten campuses. I think Janet is much closer philosophically to Dynes than she is to Yudof. On the other hand, I think that she's probably motivated less by the educational philosophy behind Dynes versus Yudof, and much more by the politics of leading a system of ten powerful campuses.

I think the issue for a place like Santa Cruz has shifted. We're not the kooky campus anymore. We're not the campus that's so different you always have to think of us as an asterisk. But we have a president with a very pro-growth agenda and, I think, from her perspective, that's the biggest problem with Santa Cruz.

Reti: I'm sure we'll get into that more in terms of talking about the LRDP and town/gown relations and all that.

Blumenthal: Yes, we will.

Reti: Well, so, maybe that's a good place to stop for today.

Expanding UCSC's Coastal Campus

Reti: So today is February 13, 2019. This is Irene Reti, and I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our twenty-fourth session of the oral history we're doing together—today, during a Pineapple Express storm that's dumping rain on Santa Cruz in great quantities. We started this oral history during the drought and the smoke, and now we're in the rain. There is something Biblical about that.

Blumenthal: (laughs)

Reti: All right, George. So today we were going to start with talking about the Coastal Campus.

Blumenthal: Okay, absolutely. And I do hope that I'm not the *cause* of the flooding.

Reti: (laughs) Your Biblical oral history.

Blumenthal: So, the Coastal Campus. When I became chancellor, there was still not a Coastal Long Range Development Plan that had been approved. It had turned out that at least on two previous occasions—it might have been three; I'm sure it was at least two, but there might have been a third one in there too—the campus had brought the Coastal Long Range Development Plan to the Coastal Commission and had it rejected. So we were at least zero-for-two and maybe zero-for three at that point, and we were going to go again hoping not to be zero-for-four. (laughs) We were going to, ah, “try again if at first you don't succeed.”

Reti: Right. So let's give a little background. We're talking about the area that originally was called Long Marine Laboratory?

Blumenthal: Yes. It was Long Marine Laboratory, plus the additional space that the campus had gotten and put together. We started calling it the Coastal Campus and we were trying to go forward with a Coastal Long Range Development Plan.²⁷¹ A plan had been developed, but it had been worked on a lot because of the rejections earlier at the Coastal Commission.

So there was a real movement to bring it again and to get it passed eventually. We wanted to be cognizant of what had happened earlier. Part of the difficulties earlier was that the staff of the Coastal Commission was not particularly supportive of our application. They felt that there were flaws in the way we were doing things, and although we had tried to reduce those flaws, it still didn't have a positive staff recommendation. Suddenly I was the chancellor and trying to get all of this done. I had a conversation with Peter Douglas,²⁷² the head of the staff for the Coastal Commission. He was one of the biggies in passing the Coastal Act that *established* the Coastal Commission. He died maybe three, four years ago, and so he was replaced on the Coastal Commission. But he'd been the director of the Coastal Commission since its inception, until quite recently. Anyway, I had a phone conversation with him, and talked about some of the outstanding issues, and the politics of going again to the Coastal Commission. I found him to be both reasonable and helpful.

Reti: At issue here was the expansion of that campus?

Blumenthal: Well, yes. There was the issue of the expansion of the campus—doing more there than was already there. There were certainly things there already: Seymour Discovery Center, for example. There was already a building, which we also wanted to expand, and we knew we wanted to build another Coastal Science Building, among other

things. Some of our Coastal Campus was used for the National Fisheries; we wanted to encourage that; for USGS. It was really a hub of scientific research around the coast. So at some level it was kind of like a no-brainer that the Coastal Commission would want to have a research enterprise that studied and wanted to preserve the coast, which is a part of its mission. This seemed like a no-brainer. But on the other hand, we'd been rejected twice. Essentially, we were being judged by the same standards as an apartment complex, or whatever else you might build along the coast, for better or for worse.

It was clear we wanted to go forward. So after talking with Peter, we did more negotiations with the coastal staff, trying to whittle down the issues. Then I had a conversation with Henry Yang, the chancellor at Santa Barbara, because the whole campus is on the coast there. I wanted to hear from him what his thoughts were about working with the Coastal Commission. Henry's answer was very Henry-like. Basically, he said when he goes to the Coastal Commission, he meets with every single Coastal Commissioner. He just goes around to their homes, and he meets with them, and he lobbies them, and eventually he wins them over with his charm. That is very Henry. Henry will go and meet with anyone, no matter how unpleasant they might be, and he'll just keep meeting with them until somehow he can get them onto the right pathway. I had no doubt that was successful for Henry. But that isn't my personality, to try to keep doing that and I didn't know that I really wanted to spend the time to do that. And I was skeptical that it would do that much good. It's one thing for Henry to talk about the campus to the Coastal Commissioners. Here I was talking about the Coastal Campus, which at some level I didn't even know that much about. I mean, I knew about it; I was prepared to defend it—but this wasn't something that I lived and breathed. So I wasn't quite as expert about the Coastal Campus as, say, Henry was about the Santa Barbara campus, or as I was about the main Santa Cruz campus.

But we did arrange to go and meet one of the relatively new Coastal Commissioners at that time, who was local, Steve Blank,²⁷³ who lived up probably halfway to Half Moon Bay. Steve was an interesting person. Steve had made a lot of money in Silicon Valley; he was a faculty member at Stanford in their business school. He had bought property along the coast. He wanted to build a big house there and his application was denied by the Coastal Commission. So he sued, and he ultimately prevailed and was able to build his house. After that subsequent event, he was *appointed* to the Coastal Commission.

Reti: Interesting story!

Blumenthal: Interesting story. So we decided that Gary Griggs²⁷⁴ and I would go up and visit with him because clearly he's a smart guy, clearly going to be influential, etcetera. So Gary and I drove up there in Gary's sports car. We met with him and it was a very good meeting. He was very gracious. He talked to us for a long time about the Coastal Campus. We tried to be persuasive about why this was an important thing to do and to get done. At the end of the conversation, he said he was going to fully support it, but he also wanted to tell us that this was going to be a hard sell. I was surprised, because I felt like it was such a compelling case. He said, "No, this is going to be a hard sell. Before you guys came today, if you'd asked me, I would have said I was leaning toward voting against it."

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: Just because it's another infringement on the coast.

Reti: A big development.

Blumenthal: So he was not generally supportive, but after he talked with us, and he heard about all the great things that were going on there, etcetera, he said, "I will actively support it." In fact, he ultimately agreed to be the person who seconded the motion to

approve. The person who made the motion was Dave Potter,²⁷⁵ who was then a county supervisor for Monterey County who was also on the Coastal Commission. Dave was very supportive of making this happen, and he made the motion, which Steve seconded.

But meanwhile, we were still in negotiations with the staff at the Coastal Commission. As the time got close, they whittled it down to one issue that was still at issue, and that is coastal access for the public. The Coastal Commission generally is insistent on coastal access. They regard it as a part of their charge, from when the Coastal Commission was established. The people here felt that it was inappropriate, that there were sensitive beach areas within the Coastal Campus that would be subject to erosion and other things if too many people visited it, and they also felt that there were safety issues that required some level of control of access. So the Coastal Commission staff and the campus were at odds over this issue.

Before we brought it to the commission, I stepped in and I insisted that we cave. I took what Steve Blank said seriously, which was this was not going to be a cakewalk, even though I thought the case was overwhelmingly strong. I wanted to go in there with an unambiguous staff endorsement of our application. I thought that would be the way to win the day, even though the Coastal Campus folks weren't entirely happy with me because they felt I had given in on an important point. My thinking was more strategic than specific. Frankly, I don't give a damn about coastal access. (laughs) But I do care about getting this approved.

So we all traipsed up to San Francisco for a meeting of the Coastal Commission, which took place in City Hall in San Francisco. It was a long, long day. For better or for worse, our item was agendaized late in the afternoon, and we somehow didn't know that it was going to be that long. So we sat through a whole day of the Coastal Commission meeting,

which was enlightening in some ways, scary in other ways. It was clear there are a lot of issues that they have to deal with. Sometimes they make some real enemies. But it was also clear that on the Coastal Commission a couple of the influential commissioners were radical and there was no way you were going to convince them of anything.

Finally our item came up. I made a presentation, and then I introduced Gary, who made a presentation. Gary did a really good job. Then the opponents got an opportunity to present. It was kind of surreal to listen to the opponents of this. At the time, we were still embroiled in a dispute with the city of Santa Cruz over our campus Long Range Development Plan. There were lawsuits going on over our Long Range Development Plan. We were definitely at odds with the city and the county. But the city had very carefully taken a neutral stance on the *Coastal* Long-Range Development Plan; they did not oppose it. They weren't going to go help us, but they were not opposed to it. That was good news. On the other hand, there were opponents, some of whom came from CLUE [Coalition to Limit University Expansion]; some from other sources, from God knows where. The attorney representing the opponents was Volker, the same attorney that represented CLUE.²⁷⁶

But what just blew me out of the water was listening to the testimony offered by the opponents. They had brought in several people to give oral testimony at the commission meeting, including some biologist, or somebody who claimed to be a biologist; somebody who claimed to be a wildlife person. It was obvious to me that this was pseudo-science. These were charlatans that they brought in; this wasn't serious scientific work. I'm not a biologist, but it was clear the stuff they were saying was just— I don't want to mimic Trump and say, "fake science," but it wasn't real science; it wasn't what I would regard as serious science that's peer-reviewed. It's somebody's claims about stuff, unsubstantiated by data. But they did a lot of presentations in opposition to this, which was just kind of

amazing to me. I felt it was just so weird. I don't mind people disagreeing with me, but it shocks me when people will actually lie and cheat in order to get their position, which I guess in today's world maybe wouldn't shock me quite so much as it did then. What changes a decade brings!

Reti: It's sad.

Blumenthal: But I was quite shocked by it. After that, the Coastal Commission staff got to opine, and the staff unambiguously recommended approval. They were strongly supportive. Well, of course; we had met every single one of their requests. We had basically caved on everything, or negotiated an agreement with them on everything. So they were very strong in recommending it. Then the commissioners got to speak. It was really kind of shocking to me how much opposition there was on the Coastal Commission. It was clear there were a couple of really radical types who wouldn't agree to build a sand house on the beach—(laughs) I'm overstating it—but any development.

Overall, I was surprised by the amount of negative comments coming from the commission. I, for one, was really scared, and I actually think Gary was, too. We were talking to each other, trying to figure out what the vote was going to be. So they finally voted, and I think, if my memory serves me correctly, it was something like eight-to-six approval. Potter introduced it and Steve Blank seconded it. And so, in a way, we escaped by the skin of our teeth. But to this day, I really believe the case we made was so strong and so powerful it should have been unanimous. This should have been a no-brainer and yet, I felt as though we had just squeaked by. If we hadn't persuaded Steve, we wouldn't have gotten through this one.

So it was a cliffhanger, but we got it done, which is of course what matters at the end of the day. But it was shocking, and it was also clear that they would not countenance

anything taking place at the Coastal Campus that wasn't related to the coast. That was one of their absolute insistences. I can't fundamentally object to that.

They opened the access and I think it was supervised in some way. I don't remember the details. There is some supervision. Years later, it became somewhat controversial, because the campus decided to ban dogs from coastal access there, in part because dogs wander off of the paths. Dog droppings can occur, but it's more that the dogs wander off, and can disrupt the local environment. That was very controversial in Santa Cruz; a lot of people wrote us very nasty letters because we wouldn't allow dogs. Probably we were punishing people who were responsible, who used leashes all the time. I suspect many people *did* keep their dogs on a leash. But there were some who didn't keep their dogs on a leash.

But we did what we did and ultimately it was approved. And basically, then we could go forward with other development within the Coastal Campus. And, of course, years later we dedicated it as the Wells Fargo Coastal Science Research Center. Wells Fargo sold us at a discount part of the land, so you could regard it as a donation of a part of the land, some of the land, for the Coastal Campus. So we agreed to name, I think, that part of it after Wells Fargo Bank.

So that was the Coastal Campus. And, again, it was the work of Gary Griggs and his staff that was crucial to make this happen. I think it was also Gary's persuasiveness with Steve. And, by the way, Steve Blank—we later invited him to join the foundation board, which he was on for a few years. He became a friend of the campus. I still think he's a friend of the campus. So it was a good start of a relationship. He's an interesting guy.

Basically that's the Coastal Campus, in a nutshell.

Reti: Okay, that's great. Thanks, George.

UCSC Campus Counsel

Blumenthal: Next is Campus Counsel.

So, first a little background. I may have touched on this in the past, but there have been some issues on the Santa Cruz campus with regard to legal representation of the campus. For many, many years, somebody from the Office of General Counsel in Oakland would sometimes spend a day on the campus to provide some help on the campus and basically have responsibility up in Oakland for the Santa Cruz campus. For years it was David Birnbaum, who was a very good lawyer, and a very, very competent and smart guy.

But there were some issues from the past. I may have alluded to this in an earlier discussion, but during the whole Meister affair, when Bob Meister was pursuing his lawsuit against the university and his claims that the university had violated his rights, at a certain point a group of five faculty members came together to go through the public records of the court case that Meister had initiated and basically summarize them for the faculty. They issued a report, which I think went to the faculty, or went to the Academic Senate, and was presented at a senate meeting. However, when that report was generated, all the five members of that group got a letter from David Birnbaum, General Counsel, on behalf of the campus—which meant on behalf of the chancellor, who I think was Karl Pister—basically warning them that by issuing this report they were potentially in violation of the law, that there were libel laws they might be subject to, or there were other laws where they might face civil penalties. It was basically a threatening letter.

As a result of that letter, one of the co-authors of that report dropped off the report. That changed a little bit of the debate that took place at the senate meeting, from a debate about the substance of the Meister case. I think there were substantive things that should have been discussed at the senate—I'm not saying they weren't—but a lot of the discussion

turned to the issue of academic freedom, and the issue of whether or not the university was threatening faculty based up on presenting a report of material entirely garnered from the public record. The result of that was that the reputation among the faculty of the Office of General Counsel was somewhat less than you might have hoped, to say the least. I believe that counsel was probably acting on the behest of the administration. So I'm not sure it was counsel that was the key party here, but I don't know.

Reti: When you say "administration"—

Blumenthal: I mean the chancellor. I'm sure it must have been the chancellor at the time—or the EVC, conceivably. So that was a reputational hit on the Office of General Counsel's representation of the Santa Cruz campus.

I talked about interviewing a lawyer from OGC—in that case it turned out to be Carole Rossi—to be the lawyer who represented Privilege and Tenure Committees on the campuses. But in addition, I was the chair of the *local* Privilege and Tenure committee. And, as I think I've discussed before, after fifteen years of holding no hearings, during my first year as chair we held *two* disciplinary hearings. So you can blame me for that. (I'm just joking; that's not true.) And, of course, we wanted legal representation, but as chair of the committee, my problem was, well, I thought personally that the representation from the Office of General Counsel would be just fine; everybody loved Carole; on the other hand, I was also sensitive to some of the sensitivities on the campus with regard to the Meister business that had happened not that long previously, within a year or so previously.

So I went to the EVC, who must have been John Simpson, and I asked for funding to provide local representation for the Privilege and Tenure Committee outside of OGC—which was certainly legal, but we didn't have the means to do it. Ultimately, that was

forthcoming, and we hired a then newly retired faculty member who was a lawyer, Dick Wasserstrom, to play that role. So Dick, for a couple of years, advised Privilege and Tenure on legal issues surrounding privilege and tenure here. Okay, so that's the background.

So fast-forward a few years. I had just come in as acting chancellor. At that point, we had a half-time lawyer, who spent half time here and half time at the Office of General Counsel. I soon came to realize that that wasn't very satisfying for me. I did need advice and advice that I could trust. I'm just going to admit up front, I am a really difficult client in academia, because number one, I know a lot about the law. Maybe I'm tooting my own horn, but I helped a bunch of people, including my wife, study for the bar. And a couple of my closest friends are lawyers.

Reti: Right—going way back.

Blumenthal: Going way back. So I know enough law to be dangerous, and I know how to ask questions.

And secondly, I do believe that the role of a chancellor is not to follow the advice of lawyers, but rather to be informed by the advice of lawyers. There are times when the chancellor, as a CEO, should *not* follow the advice, because the advice of lawyers is intended to minimize risk, and minimize the chance of losing a lawsuit. But sometimes the best policy for a campus is to *take* more risk. Even though it involves more risk, there are other benefits that outweigh— So I was keenly aware of that, and I wanted more and better representation.

So I talked at some length with Dave Kliger, who was very much on board. In fact, Dave may have even initiated this conversation with me. I want to give him credit—that he had been thinking about this and worrying about this—but in me he had a very receptive audience. We agreed that we would hire a full-time campus counsel. At that time several

campuses didn't have full-time counsel: Santa Barbara didn't; Merced didn't; maybe a few others. But most did. So I talked to Charlie Robinson,²⁷⁷ who's the systemwide general counsel, and we agreed we would do a search within his office for somebody who was interested to come down here. Somewhat to my utter astonishment, we got four really strong candidates. I interviewed all four of them. I would have felt very, very comfortable with any three of the four, and maybe even the fourth one too. They were really good. And they've gone on to other careers—I mean the ones we didn't hire. Very successful.

One of the candidates was Carole Rossi. I had a previous history with Carole, and I already believed that Carole walked on water. I had evidence to show that based upon the responses from the campus Privilege and Tenure committees, which I did monitor while I was chair of the UC P&T. and I'd worked so closely with Carole on both the Code of Conduct changes and the senate bylaw changes. It would have been very difficult for one of the others to have convinced me not to hire her. But I did interview them all and I was very impressed. I really have to say that they were really good.

So we hired Carole, and she stayed here for, I don't know, maybe six years, maybe seven before she retired. Carole was great. Carole immediately established a rapport with a whole bunch of offices around campus. People started coming to her with their problems.

Reti: I went to her with some oral history questions and she was fabulous.

Blumenthal: Well, she was absolutely great. I know that she was the valedictorian of Hastings when she went to law school. She may even have taken a class from Kelly [Weisberg, Blumenthal's wife]; I don't know. But she certainly is very smart, and very talented, and very approachable. She set a standard for general counsel for this campus. I don't think people realize how well we had it when we got her. She was with us during the LRDP stuff. I often used her as a translator to translate from outside counsel either

language or issues in a way that I could understand. Carole was always a pleasure to work with; I like her immensely. Even to this day, I occasionally get a chance to work with her on something, and it's always a pleasure. I can't say enough nice things about her. She's now moved to Sacramento, so she's no longer in the area. She was fantastic.

But eventually she decided to retire and we had to search again. We did a full search, including an outside search that time, because I think Charlie had the sense there weren't that many people, necessarily, at that moment in time, who were looking for a campus counsel job. We did a full search. I interviewed the first candidate, who was Mike Troncoso.²⁷⁸ I really liked Mike, and then it turned out he got another fantastic job offer. I called him at home, and I said, "Look, hold on for a couple of days; give us a chance to compete for you. I can't offer you the job, because I haven't interviewed everyone yet, but I really want you to hold off." So he did. He was impressed that I would call him at home. So he held off, and we were ultimately able to recruit him. Mike came here and Mike was just as fantastic—very smart, very able. I stole him away from Kamala Harris. Mike had been the chief of staff to Kamala when she was district attorney in San Francisco and he moved with her to Sacramento when she became the attorney general. So he was, at the time, the chief of staff to the attorney general. That's where we got him from. I was a little concerned that he hadn't been in a university, so he was going to have to learn stuff. No problem. Mike was so fast, and so sharp, and he did his homework. And he was so easy to communicate with. He was great and I really grew to like Mike a lot.

A few years, maybe two years, maybe three years later, Mike left. He decided to take a job at the Office of the President. He had been doing some work for UCOP in intellectual property, kind of as a sideline, and they wanted him to come full time to do that with the healthcare system. This was at the time when there had been the cyber break-in at UCLA, so there was a huge effort on cybersecurity in the UC system, particularly with regard to

medical centers. They really wanted Mike to come to UCOP and do that, and Mike saw that as an opportunity for his career development as well. So, while I was devastated that he was leaving, I really was supportive of him. He has since moved on; he's left UCOP, and he now works with the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. He's chief counsel to one of their major sub-initiatives.

Then we did another search, and we hired Lorena Peñaloza.²⁷⁹ She was the campus counsel for two of the CSU campuses. She'd been in Long Beach working at their Office of General Counsel. I interviewed her; I talked at length with Charlie Robinson, who also interviewed the candidates. Charlie and I were in agreement that she was the strongest one. She's come in and she's done a fantastic job since getting here.

I have been thrilled with the quality of the legal counsel we've had on this campus. I'm very proud of that. I think it's been a game-changer. I believe we have saved far more money as a campus through our counsel than it has cost us.

But it's also true that Carole warned me from day one that if she was successful, she would be convincing me to hire more than one attorney. So it didn't take us long to get to two attorneys and I've just approved going to three—which seems like a lot, but I actually think for our campus, we need it.

Reti: And why is that?

Blumenthal: Because we have so many issues.

Reti: Like growth issues?

Blumenthal: We have issues around human resources. You wouldn't believe the HR issues that we have. We have issues around the Long Range Development Plan. We have issues around our building projects, like Student Housing West. We've got issues galore.

We have issues with contractors who we hire. Yeah, lots and lots of issues we need to deal with legally. Then we've had some Title IX issues as well. One person cannot possibly do it all. Now, even three people cannot do it all. You still need people who have special skills. So we've been really fortunate over the years, in the Office of General Counsel. Kelly Drumm,²⁸⁰ who's a lawyer up there, has worked closely with us on CEQA issues—California Environmental Quality Act issues. And she has been great; she has just been fantastic. She understands things deeply; she's strategic in her thinking; she is an amazing hard worker.

So I think the campus has been very well served by legal counsel, and having that office developed was probably a very, very positive thing for the campus. Not everyone would agree. I know that soon after I hired Carole Rossi, I got a call from Henry Yang asking me about this, because he was starting to get pressure from OGC to hire a campus counsel, and he really didn't want to do it. He felt that that would get in the way of the campus getting things done. I explained to Henry what my reasoning was, but I wanted to be respectful of his running his own campus. I think he resisted it for a while, but I think that they do now have campus counsel down there. Frankly, I think it was a wise move.

Reti: Yeah. It would seem that Santa Barbara's issues are somewhat parallel to ours.

Blumenthal: Right. So that's general counsel.

I think maybe, since I have it here, and I've skipped over it and I have a note to go back to it, I guess I should go back to brain surgery?

A Health Crisis

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: Just get it out of the way. So, (sighs) I've been really healthy, fortunately, most of my life. But maybe four years into being chancellor— Alison [Galloway] was already in the EVC position, so it was after Dave left and I hired Alison.

One day, I was at the gym in Los Gatos, and I was exercising. I think it was a Sunday; in fact I'm sure it was a Sunday. I was exercising and when I finished my last exercise, I noticed I was having trouble with my right foot.

Reti: *Oh.*

Blumenthal: I was having trouble moving it, and getting it to do what I was telling it to do. So I was kind of limping out of the gym to my car. Then I got into my car and I did something really stupid: I decided to drive home.

Reti: Oh, gosh.

Blumenthal: I think I may have driven with my left foot or something, or maybe I did it with my right foot, but I was very careful. I didn't take the freeway. It's one freeway stop away, but I didn't do it; I took the streets. I drove home, but it was difficult to drive home. Shouldn't have done it, but I'm admitting this up front—

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: I got home, and I parked in the driveway. I called Kelly, who was home, and asked her to come out to the car. She did, and I told her what was going on, and we talked about what it might be. (laughs) Since I'd just been exercising, one hypothesis was that maybe I was grossly under-hydrated. There had been a time once, years earlier, when Kelly had had some problem, and we weren't sure what it was, and I took her to the emergency room, and it was dehydration. When they hydrated her, gave her an IV, she was just fine. So she thought maybe because I was exercising, I was dehydrated. So she

went and got me some water. I drank a whole bunch of water—and that didn't make it any better. I remember at a certain point I said to her, I think you've got to take me to the emergency room; I think I'm having a stroke.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: I say it that way because normally in our marriage, she's the one who's usually much quicker on the draw to go to the doctor or the hospital, and I'm usually the reluctant one.

Reti: Boy, she must have been really scared when you were saying that.

Blumenthal: Yes. So she drove me to the emergency room, and of course the beauty of having potentially a stroke when you get to the emergency room is they'll take you right away.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: 'Cause, you know, they do have these clot-busting drugs which you have to take within a short time, I think three hours, and a half hour had passed since this started. The gym was only five to ten minutes away, and the hospital was only five to ten minutes away. We went to Good Samaritan Hospital, and they took me right away; they quickly decided to do a brain scan, and then later an MRI, and they came back in and they said I have a brain bleed—which to me was terrifying.

Reti: Jeez, yeah.

Blumenthal: Because I was convinced I had a blood clot of some sort; bleeding sounded much worse. They said it was an AVM. I didn't even know what an AVM was: an arterial venous malformation. Many people have them. You know how arteries connect to

capillaries, which deliver oxygen to cells, and then that connects to veins, which bring the blood back to the heart?

Reti: Aha.

Blumenthal: Sometimes you have a malformation where the artery connects directly to the veins, and you get a little tangle of blood vessels. It doesn't do anything; it's not like it supplies blood to anything. It's just a tangle, a useless tangle. But sometimes under certain circumstances, they can start to bleed. And if it's in your brain where that happens, it can be quite serious.

So I think they gave me clotting drugs, and they said they were bringing in a neurosurgeon. So we waited. And, you know, I'm sitting there, and kind of amazingly—I mean, I realized this was serious, that a) I might die; that b) I probably was going to be disabled at the end of this, and therefore would probably have to resign as chancellor.

I'm sitting there thinking all this in the hospital, and I was amazed at how calm I was about it. I mean, even the "I might die" part. It just felt like it was out of my control at this point, and I was just going to have to live or die with whatever happened.

So they finally brought in this neurosurgeon, who was a young guy. We talked to him about what an AVM was, and he said there were various treatment options. I think by that point they had stemmed the bleeding, or given me enough clotting material that it clotted up and stopped bleeding. But there was still the danger that it was going to start bleeding again at any minute. And he said, well, he wasn't sure what's the best thing to do— It could be radiation therapy; it could be surgery; it could be something else that they might do. He said he wanted to go the next day and consult with his colleagues at Stanford to get an opinion.

Well, that was not going to satisfy Kelly. My wife is a very assertive woman. So he left; she grabbed my phone, which I had with me, and she found Larry Pitts's number and called Larry. Larry is, of course, a brain surgeon at UCSF, a neurosurgeon. So she talked to Larry, and Larry, I think, got some data from the hospital. He must have gotten access to the scans. I don't know that for sure. Or else he got access to the interpretation of the scans; I don't know. But he found out some stuff, and then he called Kelly back, and basically he said, "George needs surgery (thumping desk for emphasis); he needs it now, and he needs it at UCSF, because there's a guy at UCSF who's done 500 of these surgeries. And he needs to be transferred. I will take care of that."

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: So it pays to have a neurosurgeon friend.

Reti: Yeah, no kidding.

Blumenthal: It took a while for the transfer to happen. I think it was that night. They brought an ambulance; they transported me up to UCSF, and the next morning they took another MRI. (I think one hospital never trusts another hospital's tests.)

They wanted to do a—what did they call it? But it's where they stick a probe into the artery in your groin, and they snake it up through your body all the way into your brain, so they can examine the AVM from inside. So they did that. I had to be awake for that.

Reti: My god. How bizarre.

Blumenthal: So it was after they did that that they concluded I really did need surgery. I'm not sure, but I think one of the ways they treat AVMs is to do that procedure where they stick the probe all the way up into your brain, and then if the AVM has certain

characteristics, they simply glue it shut. They inject glue, and they just use glue to tighten it all up. But they didn't tell me that; those are things I've learned since then.

They said I needed surgery. By then, I was pretty out of it. (laughs) I had told Kelly—she was supposed to teach that day—I told her, go teach your class. I said, “This is crazy. I'm going to be here for a long time, and, you know, whether I live or die, your being here isn't going to make any difference, so you may as well go teach your class.”

So she went and taught her class. Fortunately, they called her to get permission to do the surgery. They called her on her break; so she got the call and was able to give permission.

Reti: Oh, my gosh.

Blumenthal: And so they took me directly from this procedure into the brain surgery, and literally did a craniotomy, which means you cut a chunk of skull out of your head, and then stick a probe in there and take out the AVM, and then stick the skull thing back in and screw it into place.

So they did that. The surgery lasted for hours. Kelly came back to the hospital after her class. Larry was very nice: he met her there. Larry arranged for the two of them to wait in the chancellor's office at UCSF.

Reti: Aw.

Blumenthal: And they waited, and eventually I came out of the surgery and woke up, and I was fine.

That night, we decided to call Sarah, my daughter. My son already knew: my son was living at home at that point, so he, I think, had come up with Kelly, or was about to come

up, so he was in the loop. But our daughter was at Harvard at the time, as an undergraduate, and she was majoring in neuroscience.

Reti: Hah!

Blumenthal: So Kelly called her, and Larry was there, and she kept asking Kelly questions. So Larry got on the phone. I remember listening to this conversation. Larry's talking in great detail about these various portions of the brain, and—I mean, I didn't understand anything. It wasn't just that I'd gotten out of surgery and was woozy. It was very technical.

But in any event, we were pretty sure the surgery was successful. Not absolutely. I was scared, because, you know, back when I grew up, when patients had brain surgery, they were never the same afterwards. They were always hugely deficient in one way or another. So I had a lot of fear that I would be hugely deficient in one way or another. They assured me that there was a good chance that as the brain swelling went down, I'd be fine—but the brain was swollen, and we had to wait for it to un-swell.

The next morning when I woke up, I really was panicked. I'd asked Kelly to bring my—or maybe Aaron brought it—my iPad, so that I could use my iPad while I was in the hospital. One of the things that I normally did for recreation was I would play Sudoku on my iPad. So I tried to play Sudoku, and I just couldn't do it. I had a lot of trouble doing it. And when I tried to type an email, I had a lot of trouble finding the keys. So I was really panicked that I had a permanent disability. When the doctor came in and I asked him, he said, "Come on, be reasonable. You were under anesthesia. It's going to take a few days for the anesthesia to wear off. You know, get real. Do this in a few days, and then start getting worried."

And he was right, by the way. It quickly came back to normal.

The next morning, it must have been Tuesday, I called Maurene [Catto], who was my assistant. Kelly had called her on Sunday to let her know what was happening. One of my habits is I always call my assistant every morning. Every morning I call Margaret when I'm driving in, just so we catch up on stuff that has happened since yesterday, and I know what's going on today, etcetera. It's a very standard thing that I do every day. So I called Maurene [Catto] at the usual time, and she was kind of shocked.

Reti: From the hospital—wow.

Blumenthal: From the hospital. I'd had surgery the previous afternoon. So I called her and we talked, and then I asked her if Alison was in, and she was. So I talked to Alison. One of the issues I wanted to raise with Alison was what we should say about this. I felt very strongly that I had to be open and transparent about it. When Denice was chancellor, and Denice had her issues—Denice had mental issues which hospitalized her, and she also had thyroid issues. I think her thyroid was removed. And people without thyroids—it's controllable with medication, but you have to get the medication just right, and if it gets a little bit out of whack, it can be really quite serious and difficult. So I think she had been hospitalized a couple of times for either mental or thyroidal conditions—

Reti: While she was chancellor.

Blumenthal: While she was chancellor. So she wasn't present a lot, and people noticed that, and commented on it. I didn't want to just disappear from view for an extended period of time. So I felt there was no choice; I had to be open and honest about it. I suggested that Alison issue some kind of a press release. It made me really uncomfortable. I don't like telling the world I'm sick—you know, my body—

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: You know what I mean?

Reti: Oh, sure. It's your private experience.

Blumenthal: It's a private experience, but on the other hand, I felt like I was in a position where I didn't have that right to keep it completely private. So she issued some kind of press release or campus statement about what had been going on. I didn't worry about exactly what she said.

Then the rest was going to be recovery. I think I was in the hospital for five days all told. The first two, maybe three days was in the ICU, because they do have to monitor you pretty closely when you're in the hospital. Then they moved me to a regular room in the neurosurgery section.

So there I'm in the hospital; I've started to recover my faculties. I felt like I was on a real road to recovery, and I didn't believe I had lost my mental faculties. But I really didn't feel like doing a whole lot of stuff. You know, my head hurt, I was tired, you know—

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: I really couldn't move around all that much. It was a big deal when they let me get out of bed and sit in a chair. So one day I was sitting in a chair in this room, and I started getting all these visitors. I don't remember in what order they came, but I remember one day the first visitor—I may have the order mixed up—was the chancellor: Sue Desmond-Hellmann came to see me.²⁸¹

Reti: The chancellor of UCSF.

Blumenthal: Yes. So, of course, I know her; she's a colleague. She'd heard I was in the hospital, so she came to see me. I wasn't surprised by that. I don't think she had to do

that; I wouldn't have been offended had she not done it, but I kind of expected it. So to me that wasn't a big deal. I wasn't thrilled, in that I was sitting in this chair—I didn't feel very presentable, sitting there in my hospital gown. I had not taken a shower in days.

Reti: (laughs) Right. And this colleague sees you that way.

Blumenthal: That's right. They had given me a pan to wash myself, but, you know, honest to God, I didn't feel like doing a lot of washing. I just didn't care what my appearance was. I didn't care if I wasn't clean and neat. But all of a sudden this visitor shows up. So I talked to Sue, and it was fine. I had a relationship with Sue, so it didn't worry me.

So the next person who visits me is Mark Laret,²⁸² who is the head of the hospital at San Francisco. I knew Mark slightly. I'd met him at regents' meetings; we'd been introduced; we had a passing acquaintance. I didn't know him really at all. But he came to see me, and so we chatted for a little while.

Then he left, and then the dean of medicine came to see me. The dean of medicine was the current chancellor at UCSF, Sam Hawgood.²⁸³ I didn't know Sam from Adam at that moment.

Reti; (laughs) There you are sitting there holding court in your hospital gown, right?

Blumenthal: Exactly. Sam seemed somewhat uncomfortable, and I was uncomfortable, but it was clearly something he was obliged to do as the dean of medicine. I felt sorry for him that he had to come and I felt sorry for me that I had to be the gracious host. Then he went away, and then another doctor came who I had seen periodically for some tests in San Francisco. Kelly had told him that I was in the hospital, so he came by to see me, just to say hello. So I had all of these visitors when all I wanted to do was be anonymous.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: So, you know, they got me out; they got me to use a walker and then a cane.

I never liked the cane, because canes are too small for me.

Reti: Oh, I can imagine.

Blumenthal: A few days later they released me. Of course, that was awkward, too, because I didn't have any clothes. I'd gone to the hospital in my gym clothes, and Kelly had thrown them away because they were all sweaty and disgusting. I didn't have any clothes to go home in. So we called Ashish—Ashish lives in San Francisco—and I asked him if he'd mind just stopping by a store and getting me something to wear home from the hospital. (laughs) I should kid Ashish about his choice of wardrobe. No. But he did get me clothes so I could leave the hospital with some dignity. They released me, and I went home. I was supposed to do six weeks of recovery.

Reti: Meaning no work?

Blumenthal: No work; no driving for six weeks. Then I had to do physical therapy. So I did the physical therapy, and I started attending meetings by phone. I attended some meetings on campus by phone. I think I attended a COC meeting by phone. After I was home for two weeks, maybe two and a half weeks, Maurene arranged a ride for me to come to campus one day a week. So I started coming in one day a week, and over the next six weeks we slowly worked up to full time. But I couldn't drive for that period.

So it was fine, and I recovered. So far as I'm aware, there's no lasting negative consequence. There are three symptoms that still remain with me, even to this day. One is that my right foot, the bottom of my right foot, is a little less sensitive than the bottom of my left foot in terms of sensitivity to touch. I can feel with it, but I can notice a difference

if I stand on the edge of a rug or something. It's just more intense on one foot than the other. Pretty minor. The second one is that I have a much more intense sense of taste than I had before, much more intense. Somehow, something happened in there.

Reti: Wow. That's surprising.

Blumenthal: And the third is dreaming. I'd gotten to an age where I rarely dreamed—or at least remembered having dreamt—and I rarely had nightmares. But after the surgery, I started dreaming much more vividly. That continues to this day. So it did make some changes, but none of those would be something I would call a bad consequence.

Reti: You can say you don't want to answer this if you want—

Blumenthal: You can ask me anything.

Reti: Okay. Did this experience change you in terms of your priorities in life at that point?

Blumenthal: It's a fair question. It made me acutely aware of how transient life is and how quickly it can end. I mean, of course intellectually I knew that. But I was literally laying in the hospital thinking there was a good chance I would be dead within hours or days, because a bleeding brain didn't sound real good to me.

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: And I was shocked, or at least in retrospect, I've been shocked at how calm I was about that. You can read about stages of grief, and denial of death, and all that stuff, but I wasn't in any of those stages. I kind of was in a stage of letting whatever happened happen because there was so little I could personally do about it. It was beyond my control. I didn't *want* to die, but I recognized that it very well could happen and I just simply had to accept that—accept it, and accept that I'd had a pretty good life. It was my

acceptance of it that in retrospect I found the most shocking. But I'm not sure that it fundamentally changed my approach to life or approach to things afterward—as you might expect someone to do—but I really didn't. I'm sure I thought about it a lot for a while, but it faded into the background, and I think about it very, very little anymore. So, yeah, for me it was a very big experience and an important experience, but it didn't turn out to be life-changing—fortunately, in many regards.

Reti: Yeah, really fortunate.

Blumenthal: I dodged a bunch of bullets there, and I was really, really lucky. It could have been so much worse. It's so scary, because not long afterwards, Jerry Nelson, in astronomy, had a stroke. His stroke was in his brain stem. He was in the hospital for a long time. I remember I called Larry Pitts, and I asked him about Jerry and what Jerry's prognosis was. Larry was much less optimistic. He basically said that where that stroke was, he would never make a full recovery—which turned out to be true. Jerry did come back to campus, but he was in a wheelchair; it was very difficult for him to speak, or at least for him to be understood. He remained productive for many years after that, but it was for him a completely life-changing and difficult experience. And, you know, other people—Darrell Long's wife had had surgery by the same surgeon who operated on me. She had had aneurysms, and was subject to aneurysms, and even though she'd had surgery, she developed more aneurysms, and ultimately died. So I realized that I was just remarkably lucky not to have had more consequences. I'll take the luck! But it was luck; it wasn't anything other than that. I mean, I sometimes joke about how dangerous it was for me to engage in exercise.

Reti: (laughs) But you still go to the gym?

Blumenthal: Yeah. I still do it.

Reti: And that wasn't the reason.

Blumenthal: No, of course not—although it may have been the proximate cause. It may have been the increased blood pressure because I was exercising that caused the thing to burst. But it would have happened anyway. So that was that experience. I feel very, very lucky. My own reaction to it is not horror, but so much the feeling of dodging a bullet. Very lucky.

Reti: I can remember when that happened. People were really concerned about you, and reassured that you came back. I would imagine that for your closest colleagues it was a major experience.

Blumenthal: Well, that's right; it was. Kelly was really good throughout that. But I also have to say Larry was really good. He kept coming back to the hospital. It was reassuring to see Larry. He kind of knew what was going on, and was very calm about it, just as he always was about medical matters. I think if you become a surgeon, you have to develop that kind of surgeon's mentality that these things happen, you know; there are good outcomes and bad outcomes, and you don't get as emotionally involved. Anyhow, that was the brain bleed story.

Reti: Thank you.

Blumenthal: Interesting to relive it again.

Public Speaking

So a couple issues with regard to my giving speeches. One of the first things I noted when I became chancellor was how often I was speaking to people. They would supply me with speaking notes—which is in a way nice, but in a way not so nice, because it's not nearly as spontaneous. On the other hand, I remember one Saturday I had to give five speeches,

and they were all different. When I started as acting chancellor, I did speak all over campus to various groups.

But I was surprised by how frequently I was speaking, and that's continued all thirteen years. So I do need somebody who does speeches for me. When I first arrived, it was Guy Lasnier.

I don't think I was bad. I was pretty good. Not *very* good, though. No one would call me a very good speaker. But I was certainly okay to good, and not particularly worried about it, because I had been speaking to groups over many years professionally. I didn't feel like I was completely deficient in that ability.

But relatively early on, a couple of things happened. One was when Barry Shiller was here as the associate vice chancellor for communications for a period. I liked Barry; I still like Barry. Barry was—is—very smart about communication strategies. One of the things he came to me about relatively early in his tenure here was his dissatisfaction with how I was doing speeches. The upshot was that he decided that we should switch from Guy to Jennifer McNulty as the person who would do my speaking notes. I was happy to let him make that choice. I didn't know Jennifer, but it was immediately obvious that Jennifer was really good. Jennifer did speaking notes for me for probably close to ten years. I love Jennifer; I think she's fantastic. So I am, to this day, grateful to Barry for having kind of forced that change. I think it was certainly a good thing for me, but I also think it was good for the campus. Jennifer's just fantastic.

I was disappointed when Jennifer went back to Social Sciences. But Marc DesJardins, who has followed her in that role, has been very good as well; he's been excellent. So I've been really well staffed in terms of speaking notes and writing; they've both done a fantastic job for me. Jennifer, in fact, helped me write a bunch of op-eds, which got

published, and I'm very proud of them. Marc recently helped me with the keynote address on the California Master Plan. I am grateful. They've done above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty work that's been very well done. I dealt with some highly professional people in that role and, again, I'm grateful to Barry for having brought that about.

But relatively early on, within a year or two of my becoming chancellor, I started getting some feedback from the foundation board, in particular about the deans. I think it was Ted Goldstein²⁸⁴ who very bluntly raised the issue with me of how our deans are presenting themselves to potential donors, and to people in Silicon Valley. Ted was a vice president of Apple in an earlier life and he knew Steve Jobs well. He said, "Steve Jobs was not an articulate man, but he got training and became articulate, and that turned out to be one of his strengths as a leader. Our deans are just not cutting it in terms of their ability— *You're* okay, George, but the deans are just not good enough." He talked about how that plays in Silicon Valley among the venture capitalist community and the donor community.

I took Ted very seriously. I thought, we really do need to get the deans some training. But I also felt as though, how can I go to them and say, you folks are just not very good at speaking, so go get training. How can I lead from behind, and just try to push them? So I decided that the way to do this was to get training myself, and try to improve myself, which was not a bad thing to do in any event, and hopefully people would notice, and that way I could use my training as a way to pivot and suggest that all of the deans do this as well.

So we brought in a guy named Tobey Fitch, who's a coach for many people on speaking.²⁸⁵ Tobey was transformative. It wasn't as though he had this deep bag of tricks, and kept pulling a new rabbit out of his hat for something to do. What he taught me to do in terms of presentation was really pretty basic stuff—but it was still not trivial.

My inclination when I gave a talk was to sort of move around. Kelly calls it “George’s dance.”

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: I moved around a lot. I kind of fidgeted, and various other things that I was doing that were not good. Tobey kept it very basic. He kept saying, “Plant your feet and give a talk. You can move. You need three spots to speak from if you’re going to move and you move among those spots. Don’t make it necessarily correspond to what you’re saying. You just periodically randomly move to a different spot, and that emphasizes a different part of the audience.” And he talked about projecting yourself; a lot of discussion about how you use your hands and body language during a talk. The bag of tricks wasn’t that deep, but it still makes a big difference in terms of how a talk is perceived.

And in my case, it’s been true from the beginning, it was true from day one; it’s still true today: I am much better at answering questions than I am at giving a talk. Because talks are much more staged. I’m not good enough to make it seem very unstaged. But if I’m devoid of a script, and people just ask me questions, I think I do much, much better at giving answers, or formulating answers and talking about things.

Reti: Do you think that comes out of your teaching experience?

Blumenthal: I have no idea. I think of it as more of a negative about my ability to present pre-arranged material than I think about it as a positive. But, yeah, when I taught I didn’t speak from speaking notes. Typically, if I had a presentation with slides, I would just speak from the slides. Or if I had notes, I knew the notes so well that I almost didn’t rely on them. But in my job, I just can’t do that, because I give so many speeches, and I don’t have the time to master the material before each speech. So I think I became much better, not excellent, but maybe into the very-good range, at a certain point. And it was

noticeable, and people noticed. So it did have the effect of being an inducement to get the deans to do training.

The other thing we realized, in talking to Tobey, was that it wasn't just the presentation part; it was also the speech itself. A lot of the changes that we did were things that Jennifer adopted from how Tobey encouraged us to organize speeches. You know: have three main points, go through them. Organizational issues. And again, nothing deep; not like the Secret Magic of Dr. X. These were all basic things, but they're all important things. You have to kind of *do* them. So Tobey and Jennifer made a huge difference in terms of how we were able to do things, certainly much better than before. So it was very, very positive. Jennifer was good from day one, so it wasn't like we were starting in a hole. So for me that made a tremendous difference.

I think I mentioned before that on a couple of occasions I used teleprompters. But for some reason, we stopped doing that. It's a pain to move a teleprompter into a new venue. I think the times I did it, it was fine.

And then, there was some group of people here in University Relations who thought you should really memorize speeches. One year, they really bugged me. It was going to be at the Founders Day celebration. They really wanted me to memorize the speech. They were pushing hard. I don't remember why. It may have been that we were honoring somebody super important, or it may have been because we had the largest crowd ever, or maybe it was the nature of the layout of the room. I don't know what it was, but they really pushed me hard, and I agreed to do it, which was stupid of me. So that year, I did memorize the Founders Day speech that I gave. I memorized the whole damn thing. And it was so hard. I've never been a great memorizer. My daughter is great at memorizing. You give her something two-three times; she can do it exactly. You ask my daughter what our code is

for the home wireless network, which is about fifty characters long, and she can just ring it right off.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: But I don't do memorization. I'm opposed to it. I don't even remember equations. In science, it's all about trying to reason things out. Memorization is too convenient a shortcut. It doesn't allow you to reason things out if you memorize stuff. So I'm always a big believer in back-to-basics, and working it out.

But anyway, I agreed to do it, and it was so hard, so hard. I spent so many hours going over that speech to memorize it. I spent hours at the gym on the elliptical. Usually I listen to books on tape when I'm on the elliptical, or watch TV news or something, but I was reading over this speech. I did memorize it, and it did go off well. But it was so hard.

Six months later they wanted me to do it again at another event. And that went so badly, because I didn't have time to do as much—didn't take it as seriously. And when I was up there on the stage, I forgot my lines. It was an embarrassing moment, to be on stage and forget your lines. I was very embarrassed by it. Anyway, we never did that again. I don't even know why I agreed the first time. There was some reason; it must have been a good reason.

But ultimately, we did get the deans to do training. I think our current deans are intrinsically better at this. But getting training is a sensible and reasonable thing to do, and I encourage anyone in a role that has a public face to get training on how they do it.

The LRDP and the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement

Now we're going to talk about the LRDP again. We talked about it before and I talked about getting it approved by the regents. But I think that's pretty much where I stopped the story.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Once the LRDP was approved by the regents, that starts a clock for any group that wishes to file a lawsuit. And, of course, it was a great service to the community that we gave them lots of opportunities (laughs) to file lawsuits. Basically, we ended up with a lawsuit from the city and the county, and a lawsuit from CLUE and their ancillary committees. That wasn't a surprise. We knew that that would continue on. There were already existing lawsuits against the campus, having to do with, basically, water drainage associated with construction sites, associated with some of the sites along some of the roads. So there were lawsuits about that. There were other suits as well. We had lots of good lawsuits going on at the same time.

Meanwhile, the City of Santa Cruz decided to put on the ballot Measures I and J, which were intended to limit university expansion by denying water access to the upper campus, which is where we wanted to expand for the LRDP. Of course, it became a political issue, and of course the university could not actively oppose these measures. I didn't particularly want to because I figured they would just pass anyhow, so why should we expend our energy there? Of course, they passed overwhelmingly. But again, there was no serious opposition, nor was there an opportunity for us to present our case.

But we did sue the city in this case, because we argued that for Measures I and J—they had not done an Environmental Impact Report on their measures. So we sued them on a CEQA lawsuit and we won. So that invalidated the city's vote on Measures I and J. But the

city then did their CEQA analysis, and they passed it as legislation rather than as a voter initiative, so that I and J became the law of the city.

So there were lots of people suing us, lots of opposition to university expansion.

Reti: And, just for clarification: the city provides the water for the campus.

Blumenthal: Yes. The city provides the water for the campus. But the county has an interest as well, and in fact Coolidge Drive is a county road.

And then of course CLUE and the various organizations up the hill—the Bonny Doon organization, the Cave Gulch organization—they all jumped on as well with their own lawsuits. And Mardi Wormhoudt got involved with CLUE and the CLUE lawsuit. So we had lots of good opposition to deal with. We're already trying to deal with these lawsuits. Unfortunately for the campus, the lawsuits were filed, quite legitimately, in Santa Cruz, to be heard by a judge elected by the local population.

Reti: Fortunately, or unfortunately?

Blumenthal: Well, fortunately for them; unfortunately for us. We would have gotten a somewhat different hearing had this been filed, say, in Oakland, where there was more of a disinterest in the issue, at least from the electability-of-judges perspective.

This went to Judge Burdick,²⁸⁶ who was regarded as a pretty good judge at the time. We awaited his decision with bated breath, and when the decision came, it was very negative for the university. It found that the EIR of the LRDP was deficient with regard to traffic, water, and housing. He issued the decision and he encouraged the parties to get together and find a way to agree with each other.

Meanwhile, we decided to appeal. My sense was, from talking to the lawyers, that a large part of his decision was overturnable, maybe not all of it, but the large part of it. It didn't mean that the EIR would be upheld in its entirety, but we thought that we could, at the very least get a part of his decision overturned, and therefore have an easier time of it as we did the next EIR. With environmental lawsuits like this, it's an interesting game, because you can lose in court if you're trying to build something or do something like an LRDP—and all you've got to do is do another EIR and come back. You just keep doing EIRs, till finally one passes through the eye of the needle and gets approved by the courts.

So in a sense, it's a winning strategy to just keep persevering. On the other hand, who wants to go through all that over and over again? In this case it was clear that if we were ever to have victory, it would have to be in an appeals court; we would never get a victory in the local courts.

So, early on in the process I had been meeting with people from the city, and I'd established a pretty good relationship with the folks in the city. We were talking to each other—people like Ryan Coonerty and Cynthia Mathews. I felt that we really were communicating and there was at least an understanding on both sides. I tried very, very hard to communicate to people at the city and the county and CLUE that I understood their issues well. I wasn't unsympathetic to their issues—which I'm not. I think that they have some serious and legitimate issues, but I also wanted to be clear that I thought there was a mandate for the university to continue to grow; that the city had agreed to host a university much larger, and that having made that commitment by the city, the regents, in reliance on that commitment, had built a campus in Santa Cruz. They may not like it anymore, but it still is a commitment that the city made.

They would argue that you can only do what you can do, and if there's limits on resources like housing or water, there are limits. You can't make water out of nothing: until we have alchemy that can convert dirt to water, there's only so much you can do. So, the dispute went on. But in terms of relationships, I still felt that over this time period the relationship with the city was continuing to improve. Even if we were deadly enemies in court, so to speak, there was no negative feelings about it. We were on opposite sides of an issue.

CLUE was somewhat of a different kettle of fish. Relatively early on, I had a meeting with CLUE, right here in my office. This was my first opportunity to meet the CLUE members. I'd asked for the meeting. They came to see me, and they were nice; everyone was very polite. But basically their message was: if you ever think you're going to get us to agree to university expansion—forget it. That was basically their message to me, and I heard it loud and clear.

So it seemed to me that we were headed toward this long and agonizing and potentially very contentious round of going to court until we got an EIR that was— you know, rinse and repeat until we get it right, and eventually we'd get it right and get something through the courts, and we'd have an EIR that we could rely on for the LRDP.

But it was suggested—and I honestly don't remember who suggested it—that we consider trying a mediated solution. It may have come from Donna Murphy in University Relations; it may have come from the city; I simply don't remember anymore. But we started having some discussions about maybe trying to bring in a mediator to bridge the gap between the university and all the local people. So we decided to give it a try: the city agreed, the county agreed, and ultimately CLUE agreed to participate in the mediation.

So we brought in this mediator, Lester Levy. I've got to admit, I was skeptical that this was going to lead anywhere. But I thought, you know, it never hurts. I mean, CLUE had

told me “never,” and it looked like our disagreements with the city were strong. And I had examined a lot of the city’s positions, and I was really questioning some of them. I didn’t necessarily understand them deeply, but what I was clear about was that the university’s approach, which people here claimed was the standard approach to mitigating impacts, was indeed the standard approach. It wasn’t just our approach, it was the standard approach. And the city didn’t agree. We were far apart in terms of our approach to mitigations.

It wasn’t clear to me how this was going to move forward in a positive way. But we had more than one meeting with Lester, the mediator. He was trying very hard to understand our position. I know he met with the other parties, as well, at some length to try to better understand their positions. This is what a mediator does. The idea was that we would start meeting together and seeing what could come of this. I just again want to emphasize—I was very, very skeptical that this was going to lead anywhere.

But my skepticism was wrong. Lester did a fantastic job. He didn’t try to do everything in one fell swoop. He tried to find the issues on which we might be able to get to an agreement and to build off of those. I think it’s pretty much standard mediator practice. When things started getting acrimonious, he would find a way to deflect the conversation into a different direction. He was very skilled. He did a great job as a mediator. I don’t know what more to say than that. I really want to praise him. There were times we would have private conversations with him, from both sides, and he was very careful to make sure that he was available to all of us at the same time. He tried to act in appropriate ways. We had a *lot* of meetings, and virtually all of our meetings were held right here in Kerr 221. Some of those meetings were painful for me, because for a period of time I had a very stiff neck. I had some issue with my neck—

Reti: Oh, *literally*.

Blumenthal: Literally. So it was kind of painful for me to sit in those meetings. But I did. I don't know how many meetings we had. It was a couple dozen. We would have our whole team here and they would bring their team. Certainly Ryan [Coonerty] was at all of the meetings, and folks from the county. Mark Stone²⁸⁷ often came to meetings. Ryan at the time, I think, was mayor. Cynthia often came, and a few of the other city council people came on a more sporadic basis to these meetings—which was probably good. I think that helped a lot, because Cynthia and Ryan were the reasonable people, and Mark was perfectly good, and also Ryan's father, Neal Coonerty, who was then the supervisor from this district also came on occasion.

They were reasonable people and so with them there was some hope. It turned out we did start making progress, notable progress, with the city and the county, at a certain point. It took us a while to get there, but we really started making progress. It required some changing of positions and understanding on both sides. I particularly want to call out Ryan Coonerty for his work. Of all of the people that were on the other side, from my perspective, Ryan was the key. He was trying to be reasonable but firm; trying to think about what was in the best interest of the city, but not being ignorant of what the university needed. Ryan and I worked well together and were able to communicate. From my perspective, Ryan is a reasonable man. You can talk with him, and not always agree, necessarily, but you can certainly have that conversation.

So we started making progress. Part of the progress was my coming to a better understanding of mitigations and what they really mean, and what's really important. An example is water. I don't even remember exactly how the university had framed the ways that we would mitigate our use of water in our LRDP, but I know that it was very different

than the city's viewpoint. The city took a very simplistic viewpoint, which I think made sense at the end of the day. I think the city's way was better than ours. The city's approach was, "You should pay for the water you use. If a new household is built, we charge a hookup fee. You don't build new households, but for every n additional people on campus, you should have to pay an additional hookup fee. If you do that, pay the hookup fees when you grow, and pay for the water you use, we won't have objections."

We had lots of discussion about that. The university wanted some assurance that there wouldn't be some scheme to cheat the university by charging us more money than we deserve to pay. But it seemed to me if we were treated like anyone else, like any business in the city, then why should we complain? It seemed to me the fair and equitable thing to do.

I promised that we would do everything possible to conserve water, which I'm very proud of. In the time since that agreement, we have done a remarkable job conserving water. Today this campus uses as much water as we used when we had half as many students as we currently do. That's total water use. So the campus has grown by a factor of two in terms of students, and yet we use the same amount of water. That's a period of almost thirty years. That's impressive and is a testament to the work that our staff have done in terms of finding ways to save water use.

Some of it is obvious, like doing less landscaping with water. A lot of it has to do with putting new fixtures everywhere on campus. A lot of it had to do with putting meters all over campus. When I became chancellor, there was, like, a single campus meter to figure out how much water we use. But now we've metered the campus and there's meters all over the place, so we can monitor remotely. If there's a leak, you'd start seeing a meter going crazy. You'd know exactly where the problem is.

We've done other things as well. Those are just some of the obvious ones. And there's more that we can do. It gets more expensive as you get better and better. But we've done a lot and I think we should be proud. And frankly, it makes me feel good that the city is so pleased with what we've done. We've far exceeded the city's water conservation goals and far exceeded what the city has been able to do in terms of water conservation. When I became chancellor, we were using 6 percent of the city's water and today we're *still* using 6 percent of the city's water.

Reti: That's remarkable.

Blumenthal: And the city is not developing new water sources.

So I think that's really good.

Of course, we got caught up in the debates over a desalination plant, largely because the opponents of university growth kept saying, "Well, the only reason to build a desal plant is because of the university's thirst for more water." But in fact we weren't necessarily advocating for that. We did host a demonstration desalination plant at Long Marine Lab. They needed a place to do it and we volunteered to host it for the city; we were doing it as a favor for the city. We believed, and I still believe, that the city has an obligation to find more water sources to serve the local community. I don't care whether it's desal, or whether it's more reservoirs, or exactly what they do. But I think that the city has been irresponsible over the last forty to fifty years in terms of not developing new water resources for a city that's growing. Wishful thinking that the city won't grow is not going to be good enough when there's a water shortage.

Reti: Santa Cruz is quite unusual because we're not on state water. That puts us in a much more challenging position.

Blumenthal: That's right, but it also makes us masters of our own fate. Generally, we have not handled that fate well. I think that there will come a day when we will regret not being more aggressive. Yes, there is now a plan that's in place, but I haven't really seen huge expansions in the water availability. But I think there are good people in charge of the city's water system. I think they're exceptionally smart and able, and I trust them to be able to meet the challenges going forward. Just think about it: having competent people who are good at what they do doing these jobs means you've got some hope that the future's going to be bright. If they were incompetents, then we'd know for sure that nothing good was going to happen. So that was an example where at least my thinking completely changed.

On issues of traffic—that's more complicated. There were intersections near campus that we had to pay for upgrading. But it turned out that a lot of the concern had to do with the number of car trips to campus. We measure car trips to campus regularly, so we know how many car trips there are. Incidentally, right now the number of car trips is the same as it was when the campus was two-thirds of our current size. So we've offloaded a lot of trips to campus to the bus system and to bicycles and other means. And both the city and the county and CLUE were insisting on keeping a limit on our number of trips to campus. That became the key measurable by which we measured traffic impact.

We came to an agreement with the city on the number of trips. But it was only later that CLUE bought into the agreement, and they agreed only if we lowered it still further, which I had a lot of concern about doing because I don't like making promises I can't keep. But ultimately, we did agree to do it, or more accurately, I agreed to do it. I did it knowing that I don't control what people do in terms of driving to campus, but I do control, to some extent, how frequently we have bus transportation to the campus, to the support of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit. And I do control the number of parking lots on campus.

You may notice that in my thirteen years of chancellorship, we have not built new parking on campus. That was a conscious decision on my part because I knew that we had to reduce, not increase car traffic. I felt like: if they can't park it up here, they won't drive it up here. So I'm guilty of making it a rare resource.

But since we're talking about parking, I might just add that I knew from day one how sensitive the issue of parking is. There's this old joke, or comment, I should say, from Clark Kerr, that a successful president provides football for alumni, sex for students, and parking for faculty.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: I knew that parking was a huge issue, and I know that was one of the things that turned M.R.C.'s hair gray, dealing with the parking situation on campus. So I was sensitive to it, and I made decisions for many, many years not to raise parking costs. I made two decisions: one was not to build new lots, because I didn't want to lose this power to control the number of trips to campus. And I didn't want to raise rates because we went through a long period of time, like—I'm making this up; I don't remember it exactly, but—in ten years there were only two years when staff got increases in salaries. It just seemed to me fundamentally unfair to our staff to raise parking rates, when they aren't getting an equivalent raise in their salaries. Even after we started raising salaries, I felt that there was catch-up to do. So it was only in the last couple of years that I've agreed to raise parking rates. And that's partly because our staff are now getting regular increases on an annual basis, and in part because our parking reserves were dangerously low. But I've now agreed to do that, and that's probably going to be the new normal, that we do periodically raise rates. But I resisted it for the longest time. Every year I would get a proposal and I would reject it. That's why.

So traffic was complicated. I might just add that in the years since the agreement, I think everyone, including me, has noticed that traffic jams in Santa Cruz have increased significantly.

Reti: They're terrible.

Blumenthal: But we also do measure traffic to campus, and traffic to campus is not increasing, or has not increased. In fact, it has decreased since the agreement. And so, even though I acknowledge that traffic in town is worse, that isn't because people are driving up to campus. I think the answer is that there are more companies in Santa Cruz, more people living here, and therefore traffic has increased largely due to things that are completely outside the university's purview. It's easy to blame it on the university, but I don't think that's the reality. So that was traffic. I had some misgivings about the traffic commitment, but I felt as though I had some control there. One change I did not anticipate at the time was the creation and growth of ride sharing in our community. Today, a significant fraction of auto trips to campus are via Uber or Lyft. And of course, I have absolutely zero control over that.

The third major issue for the city—and this was really Ryan's issue from day one—was housing. I don't think the rental market in Santa Cruz at that point was nearly anything like it is today. It wasn't so horrendous as you would describe it today.

I think Ryan's thinking was that if we house people on campus, then they're not driving to campus, and if they're using water on campus, it's a lot better than using water in the city because we're so much more efficient than the city of Santa Cruz. So having more people on campus guarantees that we will be more efficient with water. So that was the deal. With housing, they wanted 100 percent of students housed on campus, but of course that wasn't anywhere near realistic. We agreed, ultimately, to two-thirds of new students

and that was a stretch. I remember struggling with that one. Water I understood—I was completely fine with the agreement—I felt grateful to Cynthia and others for ultimately convincing me that this was the right way to go. I think that their methodology was correct. On traffic, it's more complicated—who knows what the right number is—but I felt as though I at least could make a commitment if I had enough dials that I could turn to meet that commitment.

But housing was much more questionable in my mind. We were then the second-highest-cost campus for housing in the UC system. We were already housing a higher percentage of students than all but one other public university in California. The only other public university that housed a higher percentage of students was the California Maritime Academy. And it's still true today, as of this moment in time. It won't last that much longer, but at this moment in time, we're still at the second-highest percentage of undergraduates housed on campus, of public universities in California.

Reti: Good to get that on the record.

Blumenthal: But my fear was that it was clear that if we made a housing commitment, there would be consequences if we don't meet the commitment. We had long debates about what those consequences should be and ultimately they were about enrollment and what enrollment we could reach, and the potential for having to back down on enrollment if we didn't meet our commitments. But my worry was being able to meet the commitments. We had a lot of discussions about this. I had a lot of discussions with staff here about housing and what it would take to meet these commitments. We talked a lot, and a lot of people said a lot of stuff, but I didn't emerge with a clear-cut, unambiguous understanding of what I could or couldn't do. So, in a sense, when I did make the housing commitment, it was a bit of an act of faith. I couldn't tell you honestly that I was 100

percent certain we could do it, but I had some fair degree of optimism that I was hearing that we could do it. But honestly, at the time I wasn't expert enough about housing to be able to really understand it as deeply as I like to understand things.

I might add that I really did try to understand some things deeply during this period. (laughs) I remember one issue—I don't even remember what the issue was—but Dean Fitch, who was then doing facilities, presented something about some form of mitigation. I didn't understand it and I was really confused by it. It was quantitative, but he insisted that it went a certain way, and Tom Vani agreed with him. I went home that night and I pondered this through. I just couldn't understand it. I decided I'd make a model of it. So I made a mathematical model of it and I proved that he was wrong. The next day I came in and I insisted that they come to my office. I wrote up on the board this mathematical analysis. (laughs) I don't think they'd ever experienced anything quite like that.

Reti: No, I'm sure there wasn't any other chancellor who did that.

Blumenthal: Well, I was puzzled and I really wanted to understand it. I might add, a few times while I was chancellor, when I've gotten into a disagreement with somebody here on campus, or my staff, on an issue, I've gone off and thought about it and come back with a mathematical argument. It's happened with Planning and Budget. It does happen. No one's perfect. I'm not being critical of the staff. It's just that I don't think about just looking at the numbers and believing them. I like to understand why things happen and what are the variables that you can change to make things different.

Anyway, it was a leap of faith for me on housing, and as we will discuss later, housing is still a challenging issue on this campus.

The people that we were dealing with were interesting. I think most of the city council people we dealt with explicitly were okay. There were a couple of city council people who

were more problematic. There was one guy who believed that, for traffic, the solution to all of our problems in the city of Santa Cruz was personalized transportation. He was elected twice to the city council. He wanted to put these cables up with a gondola. There was a cohort of people in the community who agreed with him. They thought this was the end-all-be-all; that if we were just open-minded enough, both at the university and in the city, to do this, we could get investors to invest in it. We could be a demonstration city, and it was going to be the greatest thing. I didn't believe a word of it. It just struck me that if I was going to demonstrate Personal Rapid Transit, or whatever it's called, the last place I would want to do this is in Santa Cruz, where it's hard to build *anything*, and where there's earthquakes. It struck me that a system like that is very subject to earthquake damage.

Reti: This is essentially the cable gondola that would lift people from the Pogonip area up to the Stevenson area.

Blumenthal: Or from downtown Santa Cruz. They were convinced this was going to be *it*. They had political power. A lot of the conversations were surreal, because I felt that we were in la-la land. Again, I'm not saying there can't be good personal rapid transit, or personal conveyance. It works at some airports; it works various places—even in some cities around the world. But that doesn't mean it would work in Santa Cruz. We're just too vast; we couldn't build that network so easily. And secondly: again, in earthquake country, I'm not sure this is the place you would want to be.

Interestingly enough, when we made our agreement, as a part of our agreement, we agreed to put aside a certain amount of money to investigate alternative transportations like that. It was the only way we were going to get to an agreement, to throw a little money at it. So we agreed. Over the next few years, people kept talking about it. We finally got

them to stop. The way we finally got them to stop talking about it: I have to credit Larry Pageler. They decided what they would do is they would simply adopt the idea wholeheartedly, and say, “Let’s look at what a personal transit system would look like—with the towers and the cables and the cars.” It would have to go up a street, for example. So they did artist renderings of what it would look like. And as soon as people saw what the artist renderings looked like, they realized there was no way the people of Santa Cruz would ever accept this. That put a complete end to the conversation.

But our great hope was bus rapid transit, having more buses. We’ve tried to increase bus service but it’s been a huge challenge. The campus at Santa Cruz accounts for half of all ridership in the county—in the *county* of Santa Cruz. Half of all ridership. Our business is crucial for the success of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit Authority. They keep having financial problems, and if they have financial problems, that means we end up having to pay more, and making it more difficult. But if we pulled out, if we didn’t continue to support that system, it would be the end of bus service in Santa Cruz. So, with their increasing financial problems, we’ve had to make greater investments in buses and in the bus system. It’s cost us more, is basically what I’m saying, which has been painful. But we have also done some experiments with the so-called articulated buses. These are the buses that have the accordion-like thing with—

Reti: The giant double bus.

Blumenthal: The giant double bus. They’ve been used in town, and they’ve been successful. So we now know we can use giant buses, which will hopefully address issues that some students have—for example, being left at a bus stop as a bus passes them by. So there are ways that we’re addressing some of those transportation problems. We led the way with Zipcars; that was an innovation that Larry brought to the campus and then to

the City of Santa Cruz. I think it's a really crucial thing. Students don't have to have a car if they know they have easy access to a Zipcar.

And now we have these bicycle things, whatever they're called.

Reti: The red bicycles, JUMP bikes.

Blumenthal: So there're a lot of new transportation options that weren't there before. One of the other challenges we've had has been the emergence of Uber and Lyft. It's now so easy and convenient to get Uber and Lyft, that now a lot of students are starting to use them. So we're seeing an increase in cars coming on and off campus because of Uber and Lyft. Somehow we're going to have to get a handle on what that means.

Reti: How binding is this settlement agreement, George?

Blumenthal: The agreement is completely binding through the life of the LRDP. When the LRDP ends, the agreement is no longer in place.

Reti: I see. So when we come up with the next LRDP, then there's a different process.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Well, thank you. This is great.

Reti: So today is March 4th, 2019. This is Irene Reti and I am here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our twenty-fifth session together. Today we're going to start by talking about the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement of 2008 and some of the events that we didn't cover yet that led up to that settlement agreement.

Blumenthal: Thank you Irene. I think we were talking last time about meeting with the mediator Lester Levy, and how at first I thought this was an impossible task, to get to an

agreement. But he was one of those people who said, let's keep trying, and he kept trying to bite off little pieces at a time. As I watched him operate, and he was really good, it was clear that part of the strategy was to just keep the conversations going. And we did. We held a bunch of meetings in a big conference room here in Kerr Hall. The cast of characters, who would be in the room—there was, of course, me. I think the EVC was still Dave Kliger, and I don't think he attended these but from our end Tom Vani attended, and Jean-Marie Scott did. She was familiar with housing issues. Larry Pageler was there. In addition, we had the campus counsel, who was then Carole Rossi. We had Kelly Drumm from UCOP. I can't remember if Ashish was there or not. I don't have a sense he was, but I could be wrong about that. And then, from the city it was usually Cynthia Mathews and Mayor Ryan Coonerty. Sometimes the city manager was there, Dick Wilson.²⁸⁸ And the city attorney was there, John Barrisone.²⁸⁹

And then from CLUE there was this big cast of characters who came a lot. There was John Aird, who lives near campus and was still around. There were a couple of other local people. There was also Mardi Wormhoudt, who started coming. And also this guy who is the founder of CLUE, Don Stephens. He came all the time. Then they had their attorney, who was some guy from San Francisco who did CEQA things. He was an interesting piece of work, but he was there at these meetings as well, the CLUE attorney.

Reti: Was Congressman Sam Farr involved in this at all? I know in the past sometimes congresspeople had stepped in to try to help negotiate with the university.

Blumenthal: Yes, I know that in an earlier LRDP negotiation Henry Mello stepped in and did it. But no, we didn't have that. Occasionally, some of the county supervisors came. Mark Stone came. He was then a supervisor. Occasionally, Neal Coonerty came.²⁹⁰ He was then a supervisor. They weren't always regulars, but they did come occasionally. But

oftentimes Neal Coonerty's chief of staff came—he'd worked originally with Mardi Wormhoudt, so he'd been around a long time.

Anyway, that was the cast of characters. We had a lot of meetings. I don't remember how many anymore. We can certainly try to look it up on the calendar. But thirty meetings—It might have been of that order. It was a lot of meetings.

One meeting I know I will never forget because it went on till 2:00A.M. We were at a crucial point, and we just kept meeting until whatever the issue was got resolved. It turned out the meeting ended at 2:00 a.m., which for me wasn't a big deal as I was willing to stay as long as necessary, though I was surprised others would. Most people aren't academics who would give that level of commitment.

Reti: What was the general tone, or tenor, of the room?

Blumenthal: It was remarkably congenial. Everyone was polite. Everyone was nice. There was no shouting or banging. The mediator kept us all on track. So there were no histrionics. It was very common for us to break up into subgroups. For example, sometimes we'd have discussions between us and the city and there would be an agreement that CLUE would leave the room, or vice versa. Or sometimes CLUE and the city met. So there were various combinations of groups that would meet individually and we usually made other rooms available so that they could either caucus, or have their meetings in a room separated from one another. It was kind of strange there.

One day it was the day of the March Madness, which is a basketball thing. People were really upset that they were going to miss the finals of March Madness. We were breaking up into groups and I said to the group that if they wanted they could come into my office and watch March Madness on the TV in my office. So they did. I'm not a real big college basketball fan, so I didn't care, but there were clearly some of them that did.

We were living together a long time. There were the rational people in the room, people like Ryan, who I think was a real leader, and Cynthia Mathews. There were people who were pretty adamant about their position. Mardi Wormhoudt might be one such person. There were people like Don Stephens, who tended to be quiet, but he did some stuff that made me distrustful. I remember one time he took me aside. I forget what we were discussing. He said, "I know how you can solve this problem, George." He took me aside and he basically proposed a strategy to me. He said, "If you just did this everything would be fine and we'll fall into place and everybody will fall into place." Well, I knew that what he was proposing would just infuriate the city. I knew that. I don't know. He must have thought I was stupider or more naive than I am. What he was proposing I knew would set us back five steps with the city. So I said, "Oh, yeah. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We'll take that under advisement. Blah blah blah." Of course, I never did any of it, but it made me completely distrust him.

So these meetings went on and on and on and on. Oh, and I forgot to mention Kelly Drumm came down from the Office of the President. She was down for every one of these meetings. She's the specialist in CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act]. If she couldn't make a meeting, she'd call in. And to tell you how committed she was—she has a child and she gave birth during this general period of time, maybe slightly earlier, and she was literally working on the university's brief when she was in labor at the hospital. Recently I saw her and I was kidding her about that. I wanted her to know I remembered.

So those were the characters and we had a lot of sessions. I think I talked about the issues of housing, water, and traffic already, and how we ultimately came to it. I talked about the resolution of those.

I just want to acknowledge that several times during these discussions I know the mediator made a point, when we were dealing with CLUE, which was the hardest thing—he tried to reach out to John Aird. John was well connected with the CLUH people but he was, by far, the most rational and reasonable. He was somebody you could talk to. He wasn't crazy. He was he was very sensible.

There were a few ancillary issues that came up, like the county road situation. So it turns out that Coolidge Drive, the road that is the extension of Bay Street that goes all the way up to Cowell and Stevenson is a county road. It's not a university road. As a part of the settlement, Neal Coonerty really wanted the university to take ownership of the road because the county had no money to keep it up. I said throughout that this was something that would have to be a separate agreement between the county and the university, but that I was open to it. It was very interesting because as we got to the agreement I said we would seriously consider it, which we certainly did. We had a study done of the road and what kind of repairs it needed and what kind of liabilities were there, or potential liabilities. The study came back kind of scary. The road needed like two-million-dollars' worth of work and there was almost no chance that the county would put money into it. But we didn't want the liabilities associated with taking ownership. You own something and you're liable for it if things go wrong. We weren't responsible for the maintenance of the road. In fact, what we have done over the years is we had done repairs to the road at our own expense, even though it's a county responsibility.

Neal pushed very, very hard on that. I felt he had been helpful in the settlement so I was amenable to maybe doing it. So we had some negotiations with the county and we worked out a deal where we would take the road, in exchange for which the county had to give us some amount of money, not nearly enough to make up for the backlog of repairs, but some amount of money over like ten years. And, in addition, the county had to agree to

indemnify us for whatever the state of the road was at that time, in other words if something bad happened.

We'd negotiated the deal and I was prepared to take that to the regents. But the county decided to back out. They didn't want the indemnification. I basically said, "I won't even embarrass myself by taking something to the regents without that indemnification." So we argued about it for a while and during the course of the arguments I had the opportunity to discuss it with the Office of the President. By that point, I had soured on the deal myself.

So finally, the county caved and said they'd go back to the original deal, and I wouldn't, at that point, do it. So we still don't own that road. It's still a county road. But I made a good faith effort. I think I could have made that work at the point in time when we reached the original agreement, but once six months, or wherever the additional time went by, it became impossible.

We agreed, also, as a part of the settlement agreement, to do an annual meeting to monitor the agreement, and we have been doing these meetings ever since. Every year we have one of these meetings. It's a very formal meeting. It has university people there. It has city people there. It has CLUE people there. It has county people there. And every year, if you look at the city council agenda, they have a little item that certifies that we had the meeting and everything is on track with regard to the settlement agreement. We do those meetings every year and I've gone to do them every year. I pointed out to people that this was my last year of attending those meetings. It's been fun in its own way.
(laughs)

Anyway so we continue to monitor the agreement every year as a part of the agreement. I think that's worked fairly well.

But there was there was one other huge issue, to paraphrase Donald Trump: one other huge issue (laughs) which we dealt with in an interesting way and that has to do with the delivery of water service to the campus. Let me try to explain. When the campus started, the regents and the city of Santa Cruz signed a contract specifying that the city would supply water and sewer service to the campus. It even specified some capacity for water service and I think the contract is pretty clear about the service area: that it was the campus. However the campus encompasses land that does not lie within the city's boundaries. The city boundaries cut through the campus and when disputes had arisen about the original [2005] LRDP, the city put on the ballot two measures, I and J, which said that they would not supply water to the campus above the city boundary line, which is where Baskin School of Engineering is.

Reti: So essentially, we're talking about the North Campus here.

Blumenthal: But it's an awkward boundary. For example, the site where they want to build Social Sciences III is on the other side of that boundary. The boundary is already not insignificant.

Reti: And I don't know if you know the answer to this, but how did the boundary end up being partway through the campus? Did it have to do with the Cowell Ranch's original property lines?

Blumenthal: I don't know why. I really don't. The boundaries of cities are set. A little bit more of this will become clearer as I continue this story. The history I don't know. It didn't seem relevant to the contract anyway.

The city passed measures I and J which basically said that they would not supply water north of the boundary of the city unless it was approved by LAFCO [Local Agency Formation Commission]. Do you know what LAFCO is?

Reti: Yes, I do.

Blumenthal: Okay. I didn't know what LAFCO is. In fact, when this was first proposed, I thought it was a joke. I literally thought LAFCO had to do with jokes I had no idea what LAFCO is, and it is one of the great regrets of my life that I do know what LAFCO is now. (laughs) It is, as you know, a state entity that has representation from all the local governments. Anyway, so Measure I and J went on the ballot, placed there by the city council. It passed overwhelmingly in the city—surprise, surprise, surprise. And then we decided to file a lawsuit and we succeeded in the lawsuit in having Measures I and J declared illegal because the city had failed to file an environmental impact report prior to placing it on the ballot, so I and J were thrown out. So what the city did is they just passed it as a city piece of legislation. So it is the law of the land for the city, but by council action, not by a vote of the people.

So when we did the settlement agreement, the city folks were completely unwilling to modify what they felt they were bound to by measures I and J. We had long, arduous discussions about this. If you look at the settlement agreement, what you'll see is the way we dealt with it was the following: Number one: the university explicitly said, and the city agreed, that we did not relinquish our legal rights under the contract with the city to go to court and get an adjudication of whether or not water needed to be delivered to the entirety of the campus. But having said that, we also agreed that we would go jointly with the city to LAFCO to request that they extend the service area to include the entire campus, and that the city would produce an environmental impact report for such an extension of boundary, and then we would jointly go to LAFCO and request it.

After the agreement was signed and sealed, and the campus was permitted to grow, we decided to go down that road. So the city prepared an environmental impact report and

certified it. Meanwhile, it was attacked in court by the anti-growth people. I'll come back to the court case in just a minute. And then we had a couple of meetings with LAFCO, which were bad meetings.

So LAFCO has these representatives from all the local governments. They also have an independent person. The independent person who chaired LAFCO was Roger Anderson, who is now a retired faculty member. Roger chaired it for a number of years, as I recall. But Roger had certain beliefs which came across.

But when I appeared before LAFCO the biggest issue was with Supervisor John Leopold.²⁹¹ John Leopold used to work for the campus. He was a fundraiser for the social sciences and then he quit the campus when he was elected supervisor. I'd worked with him as a fundraiser. So after he was elected, I went to see him and we had a nice conversation. I tried to elicit from him whether there were any issues that he saw between himself and the university. He was very nice about it: no issues. And so you could imagine my surprise and disappointment when he turned out to be adamantly opposed to university growth and extension of water rights. I felt that he could have whatever position he wants. It's certainly legitimate to have a position. But I felt that he was being disingenuous to not have raised that issue with me when I took the trouble to go meet with him privately. Disingenuous is the right word.

So when LAFCO met he was very negative and there was clearly a split of views on LAFCO. Roger believed, and I think he convinced the others on LAFCO, that if we do extend our service boundary area, this would require the university to apply to extend the city boundary as well. So we'd have to go to LAFCO again and do that. It was very awkward because already LAFCO wanted to attach a variety of conditions to the university getting a city water boundary expansion. And it was clear if later we had to come back as a

condition of that and get the whole city boundary changed, they could attach more conditions to that. We were we were being held up to ransom, it felt like. But meanwhile I felt as though I had said I would do this, and I felt compelled to give it the old college try. There were conditions in the settlement agreement that said if it wasn't successful with LAFCO, we didn't have to continue, but we had to give it a good faith effort.

So the city filed their environmental impact report. There was a court case to challenge it. It went to the Santa Cruz courts. The Santa Cruz courts validated the EIR. So everything was fine there. However, a few months later, those who were opposed to the EIR appealed it, and in the court of appeals they won. And the EIR was tossed out.

So then we entered into a long period of stasis. I talked to people in the city. The city was not anxious to do another EIR, surprise, surprise. I was anxious to move forward and get this resolved. Most of the staff here were not too enthusiastic about doing that; in fact, as we held meetings, it became increasingly clear that I was probably the lone holdout. Now, I am the boss, right? (laughs) So I get 20,000 times the votes of everyone else. But I don't feel comfortable being in a situation where I'm the only person on our whole team who believes we should restart this, do a new EIR, and move it forward.

Reti: I want to make sure I understand correctly. It's the university's EIR that was thrown out, or the city's?

Blumenthal: The city was obliged to do an EIR to extend their service boundaries.

Reti: So then what would the university been restarting because that's up to the city to take care of.

Blumenthal: We could have told them that they had to do it. We may have even paid for half of the EIR. I don't remember. But it was ultimately the city's EIR. They had to do it.

Based upon our agreement they had to do it if we asked them to. And if we didn't ask them to, then there would be no extension of water boundaries essentially, unless we pursued legal action. The city was pretty clear that they did not relish doing a new EIR.

I really, really didn't want to abandon what I thought was the approach we'd all agreed upon. I felt that it was a good faith kind of thing. Everyone around here told me I was nuts. We had a bunch of meetings.

Reti: Why? What was the source of the resistance?

Blumenthal: Because LAFCO was impossible. We would never get a reasonable action from LAFCO. And even if we did get a reasonable action, it was almost certain to be connected to a requirement that we extend the boundary of the city, in which case we'd have to go to LAFCO yet again to do that, and they'd keep attaching more and more onerous conditions to make that happen. So we argued about this for a while. It was really Carole Rossi who convinced me to abandon going to LAFCO. And she convinced me, not with an argument by a slogan. She started using the slogan "LAFCO forever," commemorating the fact that we would forever be in bed with LAFCO. (laughter) For better or for worse, they were going to be our partners for a long time and that thought was so appalling to me that she finally convinced me. So, we decided to abandon LAFCO and at an appropriate time try to ask the city nicely, and if not, pursue legal action to demand enforcement of the original contracts between the regents and the city.

We've thought on and off about this over the years since then about pursuing this actively. Generally, I have been reluctant to do it because we have really good relationships with the city and I don't want to sour that. I'm really proud, as I think I've said before, of the cooperation that exists between the city and the university. I really didn't want to upset the balance of our improving relationship. And then on top of that, the city does a city

council election every two years and I didn't want to do something at an awkward time that would have severe political repercussions within the city.

This was an awkward situation that kept going and going and going. We had some people, including some legal people, who said that maybe what I should do is build a building across the line: just do it, you know? I was reluctant to go there because I didn't want an injunction. I didn't want to be prevented from occupying a building. It just seemed that when you are investing that much money, you don't want to play games. So I wouldn't go there.

So we really have not, so to speak, crossed the line since that agreement. On the other hand, there are buildings we would like to build that cross the line. Social Sciences III is the prime example. Based on the campus priorities, Social Sciences III was always going to be our next building. However, I told people that we weren't going to build Social Sciences III unless we moved it, and that if we don't move it then some other building is going to replace it at the top of the priorities, which did happen. We built Coastal Biology, for example.

Reti: I'm not sure if this is the right place to ask this question, but at some point we need to talk about the campus's plan to expand to the North Campus. Is this water issue related to that and would this be an appropriate place to address that?

Blumenthal: We will address that right now because it's so connected. There's no way we can expand to the North Campus if we don't have water. And water is a difficult and interesting issue. There are potentially other water sources on campus. There is a well, for example, that has been used and tested, and taking water from the well does not appear to affect anything in the city, based upon the tests that we've done. But, boy, are there a lot of people around here who are scared to death of doing anything with the well, for fear

that it would raise hackles. My attitude has been to push it forward. Tracy Ferdolage²⁹² is here now as AVC for Physical Planning, Development and Operations. I think she's much more amenable to pushing the envelope a little bit.

Reti: We have this unusual karst topography that makes groundwater a bit difficult to trace sometimes.

Blumenthal: That's right. But we've done things like putting in dye. They've done various tests. Presumably, they can do more tests. But it doesn't appear to have a significant effect downstream when we take water from the well. So we do have some of our own water sources but they aren't drinkable. But there are things we can do to ease our water use.

We certainly, in my view, can't build north if we don't have water. I think it's crucial. If you look at the 2020 LRDP, the one we're working with now—they developed three plans which went out to the public and people commented on, some of which involve building north. And now they've gone back and they've revised it. They've come up with two plans. If you look at those two plans, what you'll see is that the amount of intrusion north of the waterline isn't nearly as much as building "to the north." So they've come up with alternative ways of expanding the campus. Those plans, both of them, will still require crossing the line, but it wouldn't be nearly as devastating if we couldn't do it, or if there were a delay. So that's kind of where we are now in terms of the development of the next LRDP. I think I'm telling you the next LRDP looks like it's not going to be: "Go north young man, go north." So it remains a big issue.

We are now pushing even harder on this issue. I decided that it's one of the things that I can do now in the tail end of my chancellorship that benefits the campus. I find myself doing a number of very difficult and hard things now because I can afford to annoy people

at this point in my career. I think this is an important issue and we are going to push much harder over the next few months, maybe to the extent of bringing legal action. I think this campus deserves it settled once and for all. I've read those contracts. I'm not a lawyer, as you well know. The contracts don't say much about the amount of water that gets delivered, or at least it doesn't say it in a way that's understandable and clear. But I think the service boundary is pretty clear and nothing we've done has invalidated those contracts. I think we have a good legal case. That doesn't win you a case, but it sure helps if you're pursuing it. I think the city must realize that too. I've discussed this with various city officials. They know what's going on.

We've now gotten to a point where I worry less about the relationship. One of the things that I'm most proud of, with regard to the settlement agreement, is the effect that it had on the relationship between the city and the university. Prior to this settlement agreement, there was a complete lack of trust. It was obvious. There were no meetings between the city and the university. When M.R.C. was chancellor, we used to have these formal meetings between her and the city council, but they were just for show. It's like Nixon going to China and dealing with Mao. They were show meetings. But, in terms of substance, there were no substantive meetings between the staff people in the city and the university, which is where the work really does get done. Today, and for many years now since the settlement agreement, our staffs meet monthly. Their water people meet with our water people; the traffic people meet with our traffic people. Unit by unit, they have monthly meetings. They work well together. They work closely together and they work cooperatively together. And that's how it should be.

Reti: One thing I believe we have not touched on is the negotiation over enrollment figures during that period. Was that related to the settlement agreement, the 19,500 enrollment figure ceiling?

Blumenthal: The 19,500 figure actually happened before the comprehensive settlement agreement. So what happened was when I came in as the acting chancellor, I knew that there were issues between the city and university, I mean there was I and J, for example, and I didn't have a lot of time before I went to the regents. I had tried to reach out to the city council and I had gone to one of their meetings. Everyone was really pleased that I was reaching out and talking to them, but they were kind of saying, "Too little too late." And then Tom Vani came to me with an idea. He said, "Look, our LRDP is based on 21,000 students. We have a so-called 'environmentally superior alternative' of 19,500 students, that we've studied. One option would be to lower the enrollment limit to adopt the environmentally superior alternative. And maybe if you show that level of flexibility, maybe that will win enough brownie points that it'll stop opposition within the city." That was the idea that he brought to me.

Now, I was brand-new. It must have been my first month because we had to make that decision early on. I know I made some naive decisions in that first month. So I decided to give it a try. I wanted peace, so I unilaterally lowered the number to 19,500. And, of course, it made absolutely no difference to the community. It didn't decrease the opposition by one whit. It had been a big useless effort on my part. I tried to show sensitivity to community concerns and I think people understood that I was being sensitive to community concerns. I think I may have already told you the story of being beaten up at the regents meeting over that decision.

Reti: Yes, you did. I just didn't understand the context.

Blumenthal: So, it was an attempt to make peace here.

Looking Towards the 2020 Long Range Development Plan

Well, let's talk about the next LRDP because it's kind of a natural thing to talk about at this point.

Reti: Okay, the 2020 LRDP.²⁹³

Blumenthal: So, you know, having lived through an LRDP, naturally I was chomping at the bit to start a new one. (laughter) Or as I've told some people, I was this luckiest chancellor in the world who gets to do two of them, not just one.

Reti: I think you should at least get a T-shirt out of this.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I should get a T-shirt out of this. But the time was coming. We are approaching our LRDP limit, so we need a new LRDP. It's something we need to do as a campus and I didn't want to be dragged kicking and screaming to do it the way I felt M.R.C. had. I just wanted to do it. I felt like we really needed to do this in a way that avoids the worst mistakes of last time. One of the advantages of having me involved in last time and this time is that at least I know the worst mistakes. Of course, what I think is the worst mistake may not be what everyone else thinks is the worst mistake. All I can do is my best.

So one mistake that was made last time, which was really difficult, was the lack of involvement of the faculty and of the Academic Senate. So, I appointed two co-chairs of the LRDP committee, one being Kim Lau, who's the chair of the senate, although she started when she was vice chair, and the other being Sarah Latham,²⁹⁴ who really does need to be involved in the leadership of the LRDP. By having Kim as the co-chair, we ensure that there's going to be senate involvement and communications, and we're going to communicate as much as we can with the senate, and we have been communicating. I felt that was a problem I could solve, so we could at least avoid the senate issue.

The second thing I wanted to do was have early communications with the community. So we formed a group called CAG, the Community Advisory Group, and then the question was who goes onto this Community Advisory Group. We wanted broad representation of various organizations in the community—governments and private organizations. Finally, we decided we would invite the organizations to send their representative and let them choose. So we have a CAG that has a couple members of the city council: Chris Krohn²⁹⁵ and Cynthia Mathews. It has Ryan Coonerty²⁹⁶ representing the county. It has several people representing CLUE, including Gary Payton now, who's gotten involved. And John Aird is there. But also, the chamber of commerce, also Bruce McPherson²⁹⁷ from the county. So, it isn't just opponents of the university, or of university growth that are on this group. It's more diverse than that, although it's dominated by opponents of university growth.

They've been meeting regularly. They meet every month during the academic year. They met last year and I just met with them a couple of weeks ago. I've met with them a few times. I don't attend all their meetings, but Sarah and Kim do. It's a real effort on our part to reach out to the community, so that they get some input in the early days, even if it's not all of the input that they would like. They would like to be able to determine what we do and that can't happen—but we certainly can hear their concerns and try to mitigate them to whatever extent that we can. So that's the second change that I wanted to make.

The third change that I wanted to make was to address this business about doing LRDP's every ten years, which is just nuts to me because they always end up in litigation; they always end up being contentious. So why not do something over twenty years, rather than ten years. Think of it as my gift to my successor that in ten years they won't have to do another LRDP.

So I put out there an enrollment figure of 28,000. I thought the blood pressure throughout the county went up dramatically when I announced that figure. But it's a planning figure. You've got to put out a number. You can't plan to no number. I put it out as a 2040 plan, so we're talking about twenty years. It had to be a large number. I think the university is going to get pressure to grow. We just need to figure out how to grow and whether or not it can grow in an environmentally appropriate way. We do need to be sensitive to the needs of the community, but let's see if we can do it. Let's see what happens.

The third thing was to lengthen the time period of the LRDP. But also increase the enrollment numbers. I'd remind you that 27,500 was the original agreement between the city and the university, as well as the number that was stated in the first two LRDPs of the campus.

Reti: Yes, I am well aware of that.

Blumenthal: Of course, that got a lot of pushback and feedback, but you know, it is what it is. Then the fourth thing that I wanted to do—and I'm hoping that this will be successful—is to structure the LRDP in a phased approach so that it isn't just one fell swoop going from 19,500 to 28,000. There are benchmarks along the way where a certain infrastructure needs to be built, certain mitigations need to happen. If those benchmarks are met, then growth can continue. But if those benchmarks are not met, then growth has to be stopped until you can meet the benchmark. That's usually a sensible way to approach this. There are members of the community who applaud the benchmark but don't applaud the numbers. You can't keep everyone happy. Anyway, I think that that's the direction we're headed in.

Reti: Can I play devil's advocate for like one second?

Blumenthal: You can anytime you want to, for as long as you want.

Reti: Okay, I am aware that 27,500 was a number that was based on UCLA and Berkeley's projected growth in the early 1960s and somewhat on their competition with each other at the time. I think there might be those who would say there was never a study done at that time saying UCSC could support that level of enrollment. It was a bit arbitrary, as I remember Clark Kerr saying.

Blumenthal: Yeah, didn't he say that number was set by the speed of elevators at Berkeley?

Reti: Yeah exactly, travel time between the dorms, or something like that. And, of course, in 1961, when they started planning this campus, it was a very different time in terms of our awareness of environmental limits. I feel like I would be remiss in not asking you how you justify using that number of 27,500, knowing that that original number was not really arrived at through comprehensive, in-depth study.

Blumenthal: So first of all, I agree with what you're saying about the study, though I would remind you the city was well aware of that number at the time that they agreed to the 27,500.

Reti: Yes, indeed.

Blumenthal: And it was the number in our first two LRDP's, so it isn't a number that I just made up out of thin air. Having said that, I did make it up out of thin air. I didn't choose that number because it was based upon the LRDPs, otherwise I would have made it 27,500 rather than 28,000. The reason I chose that number was because if we just project the amount of growth that we've been experiencing forward to 2040, that's about where we would end up. So it's not a crazy thing. It's a projection of growth. It's also a

projection of what I think is likely to be the demand, given the growth of California. I think there are lots of good reasons to pick that as the number to explore. And again, at this point, it's an exploration number. It isn't the final number.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: Sure.

So those are the four things that I was determined to do to avoid the difficulties—not that we would avoid difficulties—but at least not make those four mistakes. In addition, I did a fifth thing, which is the last twelve months I have gone around to address every governmental body— Well, that's a strong statement. I didn't address LAFCO. But I went to the county board of supervisors and I gave a speech to them about the LRDP. I went to the city of Santa Cruz. I went to the city of Watsonville. I went to the city of Scotts Valley. I went to the city of Capitola. Maybe there is one more in there I've missed, but I've gone to the major governmental entities within Santa Cruz County, and in every case talked to them about the LRDP, what we're thinking about. I wanted to make sure there was complete transparency and openness and give them an opportunity to give feedback, both at an early stage and at later stages in the process. So I've really done a lot of outreach on the LRDP.

Reti: And what kind of a response have you been getting from those entities?

Blumenthal: Well, I would say that the city of Santa Cruz—basically their view is, “Great, but no more growth.” The county probably doesn't want a lot of growth either, although they weren't as clear in their statements. Virtually all of the other entities were kind of in the: “Bring it on. Let's do it.” I think Watsonville would love more students and more availability of student places. Scotts Valley has been very supportive and they're very

pleased with our Scotts Valley Center. Capitola seemed interested. I mean, generally a positive reaction. So I've gone out and done outreach. That's the fifth thing that I did.

I've put a lot of effort into making this a better experience than last time. It doesn't mean it won't end up in contention. It doesn't mean it won't end up in court. But at least no one can accuse us of having done this without reaching out and making sure people were in the loop and giving them an opportunity to be heard.

And the other thing is there are some specific issues that I think are addressable. I'll talk more about Student Housing West on another occasion, especially because next week it's going to be up for approval at the regents meeting, but one of the reasons I've been such a strong advocate for Student Housing West is because I think it is a model for building housing that might allow us to be able to commit to housing all new students on campus. Back when we did this Comprehensive Settlement Agreement, and the city and CLUE were really pushing us hard to commit to housing two-thirds of our new students on campus, that caused me a lot of figurative ulcers. I didn't know how fast we could build housing. I didn't know how fast we could fill housing. I didn't know that rents in Santa Cruz would go through the roof. I didn't know if we could build housing because the campuses credit, or the debt capacity of the campus, is not very high, and therefore the ability to build housing using loans is not very high. Therefore, when we tried using traditional approaches to build Student Housing West, we could not do Student Housing West except for the fact that it's a public-private partnership. We'll come back to that. But when the public-private partnership became a viable option, suddenly I realized that this could be a model for how we could build a lot of housing on campus successfully. And therefore, we could theoretically commit to housing *all* new students on campus, when back in 2008 I was really scared to death of committing to housing two-thirds of new

students on campus. So not only have times changed, but also the financial situation has changed, or at least the way that we finance housing has changed.

As we move forward, those are the kinds of things that we will need to look at. Housing is crucial. Water follows housing. We use much less water per person than the city does. So housing people on campus is a good thing, from the city's perspective. Every student we house on campus is one that's not going to travel up to campuses every day. I think we will need to get a handle on car trips to campus. If Uber and Lyft become much more popular and contribute to our traffic, we're going to have to take a look at that and see what we can, or should do about it. We still haven't built more parking lots, except for parking lots associated with housing. I'm reluctant to do so.

A Future in Online Learning?

Reti: To what extent is the Strategic Academic Plan that is currently under development been considering online learning as part of the picture, and how does that affect the LRDP? Are we considering having fewer students in residence here and doing more distance learning and that kind of model of thinking outside the box. I know this is something people have raised.

Blumenthal: Right. I'm well aware of the issue. A few years ago, in certain quarters, online education was regarded by many as the end all, be all of the future of higher education. It would be totally disruptive technology. It was going to change the way colleges and universities worked and classrooms would be obsolete. I could go on and on and on and on. That was the sentiment among some people a few years ago. But that was before people did research. Now there have been enough online courses that there is serious and significant research on online education. That research shows that in certain populations it is not an end all, be all. Particularly for first generation and minority

populations the hands-on meeting with people is really important, particularly in the early years of their education. In some courses, online education can work to some degree, particularly courses that are very formulaic, math, for example, but in other courses, like history, it's not quite the same thing, where you're really trying to get people to think independently, or think in different ways about an issue. I'm not saying there can't be good history online courses, but I am saying that the student experience is different.

Relatively early on in this online debate I decided to do an interesting experiment. I decided that if this was going to be the future of education, I should know more about it. So I decided to take an online course. So I took an online course in artificial intelligence from Udacity. The idea was that maybe I'd learn something. It doesn't mean I don't know anything about artificial intelligence, but I thought it would be interesting, and even though it was a technical course, I'm technically capable, so I could do this. So I took this course and it was an interesting experience. I did learn a lot of things. But it was hard for me to motivate myself to do this and I'm a pretty motivated person. I really am. So if it's hard for me, I can't imagine what it would be for a student. It was hard sometimes for me to go sit at that computer. While I learned a lot, I didn't find it all that interesting and stimulating. Certainly, the thing that I think is so crucial in undergraduate education—namely the ability of an instructor to inspire a student, to take a student and make them really interested, so interested they want to pursue the subject further—didn't come across to me in the online course. A part of that had to be kind of a lack of human interaction. My bottom line was that I learned a lot. If I were a student and I needed that course to graduate, or if I needed that course to get into my major and I couldn't get it a different way, I would certainly do the online course. But it isn't something I would be happy having be a major part of my curriculum. I didn't think it was something that was

inspiring, or would persuade me to really get interested in the field. That's just me with one course. But I wanted to at least have a better personal sense of what it meant.

So what about today? Well, we have been advancing online education. The UC system has a program with a series of courses called ILTI. I forget what it stands for, but ILTI are systemwide courses that can be taken by any student at any UC campus. Santa Cruz produced the calculus sequence for ILTI. It's a really good series of courses that was produced in the math department here.

And then, couple that with the fact that we've been talking with a few other UC campuses about jointly developing an online undergraduate program at UC Santa Cruz. And our EVC, Marlene Tromp, came from Arizona State University and she helped develop the largest university online major in the country, for a public university. She knows a thing or two about it. So we're very interested in pursuing that.

But having said that, I don't think that that's a substitute for a residential college. UC Santa Cruz has residential colleges. We call them residential colleges for a reason. Seventy percent of our students do undergraduate research with faculty. The idea that we're going to replace all of that with an online program is, to me, kind of crazy. I don't think that that's likely to happen anytime soon. Maybe online will get so much better? Who knows what the future is going to be, but I don't see it in our immediate future. I don't see that as something that will intrinsically help us to reduce the numerical presence of students on the Santa Cruz campus.

Reti: Well thank you. It's interesting to hear about because I know it's something people are thinking about in relation to the future of higher education, but also in the context of this environmental impact of having students here. People may think that's an easy solution.

Blumenthal: The problem is it's too easy a solution. I don't think it's a substitute. There are some courses we could offer online that students might want to take. There are circumstances where students would do it. I just don't think that that's the kind of quality education that we should be offering as a University of California campus.

Reti: Right. Well, it certainly would be about as opposite an idea of education from what our founders intended as I could imagine.

Blumenthal: Yes, you've got it. Yes.

Reti: I'm looking at your list of topics on your outline. What does it mean to expand sideways rather than north. What does that mean?

Blumenthal: Well, if you look at the new plans that are about to come out, and you kind of look at where they are, they kind of go sideways rather than north.

Reti: Okay. And Measure U. What is that?

Blumenthal: That is the city measure that was put on the ballot just we started this process, to put the city on record as that they didn't want the university to grow. We didn't oppose it. It was not a big surprise that it passed overwhelmingly. It's just a measure that expresses an opinion. It doesn't have any force of law.

Animal Rights Protests

So now I guess we move on to animal rights. This was some years ago. Fortunately, this is not something I've worried about for a long time. But let me set the stage and say that, back maybe ten years ago, there were a number of incidents having to do with animal experimentation on university campuses. The UC campus that had the most problems was UCLA. They had a number of researchers who were physically threatened. In one

instance, they had somebody who took a hose and put it in the window of one of their faculty's houses and ran it all day so their house was completely flooded. There were fire bombings in Los Angeles. There were websites that were put up by activists basically saying that this was the moral thing to do to protect animals. A lot of this hinged at UCLA. And then to make matters worse, one or two UCLA researchers publicly announced that they were leaving their fields because they couldn't deal with this pressure. Really a terrible, terrible situation. Interestingly enough, relatively little of that happened to UC Davis. The irony of that is I don't know what they do at UCLA, but I don't think that they do a lot of large animal experimentation there. I know that at Davis they do primate experimentation. But somehow Davis has managed to avoid the worst of this issue. At Santa Cruz, however, we don't have anything bigger than rats. But we did not avoid this situation and we started having some very uncomfortable and extremely dangerous issues.

The first one that I remember was a home invasion. We had a woman faculty member who did work with lab animals. She studies cancer. She was at home. She had two children, very young children, like three to five and they were at home having a birthday party one day when a group of, I believe, six or eight masked people did a home invasion. They tried to gain entry to her home through the front door. They were blocked off. It was kind of nasty. I don't remember all of the details of it anymore except they finally did go away. I don't think anyone was injured, but can you imagine being in the middle of a birthday party for your five year old and having masked people come into the home and invade it. I mean, it's horrifying, just absolutely horrifying. That case was for a number of years investigated by the FBI. Ultimately, my sense was that they figured out who the invaders were but they didn't have enough evidence to bring it to trial. Too bad, because it's a case that should have gone to trial.

A short time later, or I'm not sure of the exact sequence, we had a firebombing of a car of a faculty member in biology. His car was firebombed. And then we had a horrible, horrible incident just off campus. We had a faculty member from biology and he lived in a two-story building. His house was fire-bombed. He and his wife and children were upstairs at the time and he literally jumped from the second story of his house. His wife and children were okay. He severely injured his legs and so he was walking around on crutches for a long time.

All of those things happened within a very short period of time. I want to praise the folks at Risk Services at the Office of the President because as all of this was going on—I have no idea what they did at UCLA—but in Santa Cruz they decided that they had to be much more proactive. So they brought in guards to guard the houses of faculty involved in animal research, including a guard to guard my house, and including a guard at the EVC's house, who by then was probably Alison Galloway. And so literally, they kept a guard posted outside my driveway for a long time. It was kind of awkward, but they did it. They did it for various biology people and researchers. It must have been hugely expensive, but I think people deserve protection.

So that was our reaction. I don't think they ever prosecuted anybody for anything that took place in Santa Cruz, but they sure did try.

Reti: Even the firebombing.

Blumenthal: Even the firebombing. I don't remember that they ever prosecuted anyone. Maybe I'm wrong.

Reti: That is a very disturbing story.

Blumenthal: To say the least. I feared that this was going to be a story that would go on and on forever. The good news is that at a certain point it stopped and there stopped being incidents et cetera. But the ideology—you could go on the websites of certain groups who basically were arguing on the web that they were acting morally, that they were on the moral high ground because they were acting to save animals from suffering etc. There were even claims that it was morally justified to take a human life in order to save an animal. Just a terrible, terrible situation.

Reti: It's important to get that down for the historical record.

Blumenthal: Yeah, talk about the challenges of being a chancellor. That was not a challenge I was happy about.

(whistles)

Academic Building Processes

Next we're going to talk about academic building processes. When I became chancellor, I inherited three major projects: the McHenry Renovation and Expansion; the DARC building, and Biomed. And we didn't have the money to do them. The state does this weird thing. They have a way of assessing the cost of a project, and the way they did it never adequately accounted for inflation, and usually underestimated the cost. Every state project was grossly underestimated, particularly in a rising market. The one exception to that turned out to be the Biomed Building and that was because we delayed it long enough that the 2008 crash happened and building costs went down.

But from day one as acting chancellor, I had to make some decisions. The nature of the discussion was so depressing. I had a bunch of meetings with Dave Klinger and the folks in

capital planning about what our options were. I wanted to know what the options were. We didn't have enough money to finish all of these buildings.

Questions were raised. So for the DARC [Digital Arts Research Center] building one option that was pushed by some people was that we build the shell and leave it empty inside because all we had enough money to do was to build the shell. That was an option we seriously considered for a while. And for the library, for McHenry, there were some of the same things. We thought of just building it as a shell which we would fill in later. I kid you not.

Reti: (sighs) I'm trying not to have a personal reaction here, since I work in McHenry Library.

Blumenthal: I know. But that's what we were talking about.

We had several meetings. I remember these interminable meetings hoping that somehow we would come up with a better option and we couldn't. To make matters worse, this was my decision. So I had to make this call, and it was really, really awkward. Dave was a big help because—you know, I kind of regard myself as pretty penurious, but I think Dave is also fairly penurious, and I mean that in a good way. In our discussions, we started converging on the idea that one way or another we just had to do these buildings for real. We couldn't build shells. It made no sense to build a shell. We had to find the money, no matter what it cost, to finish the buildings. We talked about a bunch of options. Of course, we talked about "value engineering," a term that I have grown to detest because what it really means is devalue engineering.

But we had discussions, and finally at the end of the day—and I do believe Dave and others really supported me on this—I made the decision to go forward with all of them. But I was putting the campus at risk in doing that.

Reti: And did that mean borrowing more money, essentially?

Blumenthal: It meant basically using up our reserves, and if things got more expensive, digging into our operating expenses to pay for it. It could have cost students classes.

Reti: Can you do that? I've always been told that the money for buildings is in one fund; the money for academic construction is in another; and the money for housing is in another.

Blumenthal: That's a good question. So let me let me pivot to your question. At the University of California, there are pots of money that can't be used for other purposes. So, generally speaking, money that you get for housing should go to housing and you're not allowed to use state funds to support housing. Money you get from research grants has to be spent on research grants. And so on. So there is money that's designated. Occasionally there's money that's not designated. Sometimes there are gifts to the campus that are not designated. They can be used any way. And then the opportunity funds, the return on overhead, can be used any way you want. So there are pots of money that have broad flexibility with regard to how they're used. Money that comes for teaching and research has to be used for teaching and research, like state money.

I know that when M.R.C. Greenwood and John Simpson were here they worried a lot about the color of money, to make sure that they had not just enough money, but that they had money of the appropriate color, so that they could use it to do anything that they wanted to do. When I became chancellor, I did discuss this with Meredith Michaels and basically she said to me, if you have needs, you need to tell me and we'll figure out how we can rearrange things so you can do what you want to do. And, in fact, pretty much, with maybe one exception that I can think of, I never had to worry about the color of money. I joke sometimes that there is somebody full time in Planning and Budget, who

wears a dark visor, whose job it is to figure out how to move money around so that we can do the things that I want to do. If so, that sounds like a demeaning kind of description, but I'm grateful because basically I have not had to worry about that issue. There are people there who take care of it for me. If there is an issue they'll come to me, but it's rare that they come to me. In fact, I don't think they've ever come to me about a problem. The only time it's ever been an issue was I did lobby the legislature for some exceptions so that we could use state money for something that we would not normally use state money for, on the grounds that the law had changed and subsequently you could do what I wanted to do. But I wanted a one-year retroactive ruling so that I could do it with the previous year's money. I was not granted that authority. The world didn't come to an end. We dealt with it. That's the only time I have ever worried about the color of money.

So you're right. There are restrictions. But the restrictions aren't as bad as you might think. And when it comes to capital, there are opportunity funds, other kinds of research funds. It is possible to move money around a little bit.

Reti: Okay, so we would have had to do that. But if we took this risk with these three buildings, how did we come out okay?

Blumenthal: Well it's interesting because the DARC building wasn't that much more expensive to fill it out. The library was. That was a big issue. But we got a fair number of gifts for the library, which helped a lot. And we did do value engineering to ensure that we were spending the least amount that we could get away with. So that came out okay.

The library project was an interesting one—and don't shoot me on this one²⁹⁸—I was inclined to question it. So, back when I was the chair of the senate locally, that's when that project was moving forward, or maybe it had already moved forward into the planning stage. I think it had. I questioned it at the time. I was on the Committee on Planning and

Budget. I said, “Why are we doing a library? We have limited funds. Why aren’t we building classrooms and labs? Is the library our top priority?” I was not convinced, I have to admit at the time, that that was the wisest choice to make as a campus.

But it soon became apparent that Lan Dyson²⁹⁹ had done a marvelous job really pushing that through. He was a force to be reckoned with. And the campus had already made the decision and the commitment. So I backed off.

So it was kind of funny to me that a few years later suddenly I’m in the decision-making position for the campus, and now I’m dealing with this project that I had questioned before. But again, the die was already cast. It wasn’t that I could turn it around and turn it into something else. And furthermore, it seemed we either supported it or didn’t. I would love to tell you that I had this great insight that the nature of libraries would change and that this was the wisest investment for the campus and I knew it all along. I went along with the library because I felt that I had to. We had to get this project done and libraries are generally important. But I did not foresee how the role of the library would be changing over the next few years. I think it’s good, and it’s fortunate, but frankly somewhat fortuitous that I made the right decision on that project.

Reti: Are you referring to the intensive use of the building as a study space?

Blumenthal: Yes. Thank you for clarifying. Yes, that’s exactly what I mean.

The Biomedical building is a somewhat different story because Biomed got held up. The campus had made a decision, even before I was chancellor, that the environmental impact report for Biomed would be derivative of the EIR for the LRDP, so they didn’t really have to do a lot of work for the Biomed EIR. I presume that the campus did that in the belief that eventually everything would be hunky-dory and move forward. But, of course, the

court threw out the UCSC EIR for the LRDP, and therefore by implication the EIR for the Biomedical building.

Meanwhile, I was seeing a lot of need for the Biomed building. There was a lot of demand for lab space. Genomics was growing substantially. We were doing more and more stem cell research. We really needed the Biomedical building. And students were flocking to the subject. We were limiting enrollment in our then-health sciences major because we didn't have the lab space to accommodate students.

Reti: That's a very popular major.

Blumenthal: So there were lots of reasons why we desperately needed Biomed. And yet it was held up by the EIR. So one of my motivations, one of the things that was pushing me to get this LRDP thing settled, was to also get Biomed settled. It wasn't the only consideration, but it was certainly one of the major considerations. So I was very pleased when we finally got the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement.

Oh, I didn't talk about bringing the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement to the regents.

Reti: Should we do that now?

Blumenthal: Let's do it now.

Bringing the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement to the Regents for Approval

So once we agreed on the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement, we weren't done. This had to go to the regents for approval. And that was really, really awkward because the way the LRDP was written, it, in my opinion, grossly overestimated the amount of, for example, water that we would use on campus. They calculated square footage. They used

some formula for water that assumed we did no conservation. The numbers in the water portion of the LRDP were huge. But when we brought the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement to the regents we had to show them the total dollar commitment for water, assuming we built out the LRDP at the water usage level that was envisioned in the LRDP. But the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement within it has huge financial penalties for the campus if we start increasing our water use above previous use. My assumption in making the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement was that our conservation efforts would succeed, as they have proven to do, that they would succeed in reducing, rather than increasing our water usage. But I couldn't make that assumption in presenting to the regents the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement. Instead, I had to make the broadest assumptions that were in the LRDP about water use and growth and then pay for it using the formula we had agreed to in the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement. So the regents saw a huge bill that might come due based upon signing the CSA, and I kept saying, "No, no. You need to keep explaining to the regents that this item is contingent on us failing to cut our water usage." And that's not the way they did regents items. It had to be in full conformity with what the LRDP said. So the item that went to the regents, on its face, looked outrageously expensive. And then there were other factors in there too about housing and other things. But water is the simplest example.

So it went to the regents, and thank God the way they did it is they heard it in closed session on the first day of the regents meeting, and then open session on the second day of the regents meeting. The first day, in closed session, I got beaten up, particularly by Judy Hopkinson, on the issue of the cost of the settlement. I had not anticipated anything nearly as intense as that discussion was.

Reti: Wow, and given that you have very extensive experience up there, I can imagine some other chancellor without that experience walking in there and being carved up into little pieces.

Blumenthal: Right. I was really surprised. I was caught by surprise. I thought I had answers to the tough questions, but Judy is really smart and reads everything, so she had questions I never had thought of. It was a very difficult and awkward session, in closed session. I didn't think I had done well. I didn't think we were well-prepared. After that session, I remember I put my head together with the lawyers, with Kelly Drumm—oh, and then Kelly, for some reason couldn't be there the next day, which really put me in a panic because she's the one person who really understood what was going on.

The next day was open session. We did a lot of preparation that night trying to fix the holes and make sure everything was hunky-dory. The next day, in open session, it was a much more sedate, much easier discussion and it ultimately did pass the regents. There were no dissents from it. Judy supported it, at the end of the day. In fact, I spoke with her and I talked to her about the issues that she had raised privately. So it ultimately did go through, but it sure looked for a while that it wouldn't. It scared the bejesus out of me, in terms of it not being approved after all those thirty meetings. But all is well that ends well.

Reti: How did you sleep that night?

Blumenthal: I don't think I did sleep that night. But we finally got it through.

The UCSC College System

Reti: Today is April 5th, 2019 and this is the 29th session of my oral history with Chancellor George Blumenthal. Today we are going to start by talking about the colleges, and more specifically Rachel Carson College, formerly known as College Eight.

Blumenthal: All right. So, from when I first started as chancellor it was obvious that the colleges were going to have to be a big topic. It was certainly something that a lot of people were interested in: the future of the colleges. To some extent, the role of the colleges has changed back and forth, or waxed and waned over the years—from the years when the colleges were basically the organizational structure of the campus, to the development of boards of studies and the “creative tension” between colleges and boards. I hated that term, by the way. And that went on for a long time until we had reaggregation and then reorganization. And then, for a while the colleges played an ever-lesser role on the campus.

When I became chancellor, one of my goals was to increase the roles of the colleges without impinging on the prerogatives of the departments, which sounds like a difficult challenge, and of course it is. I wanted to encourage the colleges to develop new ideas and think about new ways that they can contribute to students’ success. In a way, I thought of it as let a thousand flowers bloom, that we didn’t have to have cookie-cutter colleges. They didn’t all have to be the same. I did think it was important that all the colleges had a core course because that’s a feature of the UCSC experience, but beyond that I thought there was a lot of freedom. I thought we should even be supportive financially if colleges had ideas that they wanted to pursue, and provide support for doing that. I also want to add that I have been troubled, and remain troubled, by the notion that some of our colleges are much better endowed than others. We have rich colleges and we have poor colleges. That has led to all kinds of interesting ethical dilemmas. Do we do we provide less support for well-endowed colleges, to provide more support for poorly endowed colleges? Well, that equalizes things but is it fair to penalize a well-endowed college because they’ve been effective in their fundraising? There’s no good answer to that question. So those kinds of things came up.

But what I really wanted to see was the colleges feeling that they had the freedom to innovate in their own ways. I knew we couldn't escape the historical background that we came from, or the historic changes. The issue of the colleges is a Santa Cruz issue which is been burned into the psyche of individuals with history on this campus, in both positive and negative ways. I have seen a lot of faculty who feel strongly about the colleges one way or the other. Some had bad experiences that they can't escape from and which will forever affect their views of the colleges at Santa Cruz, and some had wonderful experiences, so they long for the day when they could recreate those wonderful experiences. Among all the many issues on the campus, the colleges are one issue I really do believe is burned into people's psyches and difficult to escape. It's also burned into the psyches of our alumni, but again, to varying degrees depending upon when they graduated.

So, there's no question that the colleges were explosive. When I was inaugurated, I made some comments in my inauguration speech about the colleges. I think that was the highest applause line by far. I hadn't intended it necessarily to be that way. I don't worry about applause and stuff like that, but I noted that of all the things I said—I said a million things—that was the one that generated the most response.

Clearly, to many people on this campus, the colleges were clearly important. Part of me wanted to provide opportunity. Part of me wanted to do no harm and do nothing that would make it more difficult for the colleges to succeed. Some colleges ended up doing some very interesting things. College Eight, and this was still while they were Eight, put in place, for example, a three-quarter environmental course and they had faculty from all five academic divisions teaching in this three-quarter course. I thought that was really cool. I thought that was an innovative thing. It was about the environment. I don't think all three quarters were required of their students. But they found a way to do something more innovative.

I think Oakes College taking over community studies was an innovative thing for a college to do. It's one of the reasons I was supportive of that. We talked about that before, but one of the reasons I was supportive was because I thought, gee, that would be a neat thing for a college to do. Colleges did different things. For example, Oakes, which I'm somewhat more familiar with than the other colleges, maybe twenty years ago put in place a science night, where every month they invite a faculty member in the sciences to meet with students who might be interested in the sciences. They have a graduate student who works for the college, who organizes these dinners. The dinners are at the provost's house. I've done these dinners every year for probably twenty years, and from my perspective they've been a great success. It gives me an opportunity over several hours to interact with students who have interest in science.

Reti: So, it's a career-oriented occasion, or is it you talking about your research?

Blumenthal: I'm not sure what other faculty do. I talk about my career and how I got to where I am. Because I'm chancellor, it makes it more complicated. Before I was chancellor, I just talked about myself as a faculty member. Then I talked about some of my research and why I thought it was important and why I enjoyed doing it. And at that point, we usually sit down for dinner and then open it up to questions. We have a robust discussion and we go whatever direction the students want to go in. I've enjoyed those greatly.

Interestingly enough, last year John Pérez,³⁰⁰ the former speaker of the California State Assembly—who is now a regent and he's going to be the next chair of the board of regents starting in July—John visited the campus. He was one of the few regents who really did visit every campus. But his original date got postponed. He was sick or something, I forget. So, we had to change the date. I'd arranged a visit throughout the day. So, we got another

date, but the second date that we did was a date where I was already scheduled to spend the evening at Oakes College. So, I talked to John and I said, “Look normally I would arrange a dinner with you and maybe with a few senior leaders to go to dinner and talk about issues. I can’t do that. So, you have a choice. You can either join me at Oakes College, or you could go to dinner with senior leaders but without me.” He said, “Well, why don’t I join you at Oakes College.” So, John joined us at Oakes College. I told him beforehand that the ground rules were going to have to be that during the first session when I talk, it’s going to have to be all about me. And he got that. I said, “What we’ll do at dinner is we’ll open it up and we can have questions about anything we do at the university, including questions to you.”

Reti: Wow, what an opportunity for the students.

Blumenthal: So that’s what we did. So, John had to sit there and listen to my personal history and go through my research and what I thought was so interesting about research. Then we had a very nice session with the students at dinner. The next time I saw John he told me that that was one of the most interesting evenings he’s ever spent in his entire life, and he was so grateful for that opportunity. I know John well enough to know he was really, sincere. John Pérez is one of the smartest people I know. He’s exceptionally smart. He’s exceptionally well-prepared. He knows issues deeply. He really enjoyed that dinner.

Reti: Fabulous.

Blumenthal: So that’s an example of something that the colleges do. College Nine and College Ten offer *Practical Activism*. The point in my thinking was there is no need for the colleges to do the same thing. I’m so pleased to see them doing these programs and the ones I just mentioned are a small subset of the many programs that they do. I can’t even begin to list them all. I can’t even begin to know them all necessarily, but I know a

lot more than I've just said. I think that that's good. I think that that's healthy for the colleges, not to be the same. Several of the colleges sponsored an accelerated program for students who come in; that's a little more challenging.

I think it's great that the colleges get together and sometimes do things sometimes collaboratively. And so, from my perspective that's happening. We can have an interesting discussion about whether it's happening enough, or too much, or whatever. I don't think it's happening too much. I think probably it needs even more push to occur. But I am so pleased to see that happening and to see the evolution of the core course from a writing intensive course to a reading intensive course throughout the colleges. You may well be aware of that change that happened a couple of years ago. When that started being discussed about five years ago, it looked as though we were heading toward internal warfare. There was a lot of concern on the part of the provosts that the senate was going to destroy the core courses as a meaningful entity. There was a lot of concern from some people in the senate that we were not effective in the way that we were teaching writing in the colleges and that we needed to do a major reboot. There was much debate about how many credits should be offered in the core course. Lots of worries, but at the end of the day people got together and they found their way toward a solution. I was really pleased to see that. I don't know how it's worked out. My sense is that it's worked out well, but I don't know. I haven't seen the data. But what I did see was a level of cooperation and give and take that allowed everyone to get to a better place. I think the way we teach writing is now better oriented toward what the students really need. I think that the core courses have a well-defined mission now and it's an equally important mission. Frankly, being able to read and comprehend and think about the issues you're reading is just as important as the ability to write.

Reti: They are certainly both important.

Blumenthal: But trying to do all things at once may not be always possible, particularly with our current student demographic. By that, I mean preparation.

Reti: So, College Nine and College Ten were kind of a new model that M.R.C. Greenwood was quite enthusiastic about when I interviewed her many years ago, as a potential model for a new way to integrate the colleges and the divisions because of the affiliation with social sciences. Is that something that has been pursued further since then?³⁰¹

Blumenthal: So far as I know, the answer is no. I agree with M.R.C. I think that it was a very successful experiment. Colleges Nine and Ten have thrived. I worry that one of the reasons that they thrive so successfully is because of the provosts that they've had. I think they had like two provosts in all of these years. That worries me because it may just be because of the strong leadership of the provosts that they've done as well as they have. So, I worry about sustainability of the model. I worry about sustainability also because I think at one point Sheldon was prepared to rethink that model as dean of social sciences. I think he was dissuaded, ultimately, from doing it. I'm not sure that the level of support from the division is as high as it was once was. But I don't know the answer to that question. So, don't read too much into that. I do know that Sheldon was at least reconsidering.

I think that one of the challenges of the Nine, Ten model is that we have one provost for two colleges. While I have no problems with that as a matter of principle, my problem with it is this issue of sustainability. It really takes a major commitment from someone who wants to be the provost of Nine and Ten. Essentially, that person gets double relief for teaching and things like that I think. So, I do worry about that and whether or not that's a good model. Again, I believe it's been the leadership of the provosts who have made that a success. I worry about whether or not we can continue to find people of that

level of ability. It doesn't mean we won't, but I'm just saying it's a worry. I worry about lots of things.

But I think it's a good model. Why has it not been picked up in other places? I suspect because the other divisions haven't seen the advantage of doing it. The next natural place for that to happen would either be the humanities or the arts. I'm not sure that the deans there have seen that as an advantage or something that would be their next priority to do. I respect that. That's their call. So yes, it was an experiment. I think it's been a successful experiment. But not all experiments are replicable. So, it may be stable. It may be a good thing to keep doing forever. But it doesn't necessarily mean that other colleges or divisions will follow in their footsteps. I just would add that I worry a little bit—if it were the case that five or six or seven colleges started following that model and affiliating with other divisions, my worry would be that this could be sending a signal to students that they better affiliate with the college associated with their own division. If that were to happen, I would say that we would need to do a lot of education to try to dissuade students from the perception that they need to affiliate with college associated with the division in which they're planning to major.

Reti: That problem goes back to the beginning of UCSC, because at the beginning students in science were encouraged to be at Crown; and students in social sciences were supposed to go to Stevenson, for example. But they wanted students to step outside of their majors and have a broader view. This was kind of a contradiction, perhaps.

Blumenthal: I go to all of these admissions events around the country and I explain this over and over again to admitted students. It's all true, but the people are so fearful that this choice of college will be so important or portentous for their lives in college. It causes a lot of apprehension. And that is true even of faculty. What I came here, science faculty

were strongly encouraged to affiliate with Crown, which is one of the reasons I didn't want to affiliate with Crown.

Reti: That brings up a question I was just going to ask you. Are faculty still affiliating with colleges?

Blumenthal: (sighs) Oh, gosh. What a nasty question. I think the answer to that question is largely yes. When I became chancellor, I was well aware that many faculty had not affiliated with colleges. So, I initiated several conversations with Bill Ladusaw, who was then vice provost of undergraduate education, about how we might get this done. And there were problems. Part of the problem was that the provosts didn't want us to be mandatory about this. They wanted to attract faculty, rather than be receivers of forced faculty commitments, which I can understand. I was unable to build an agreement that we could just put in place, a policy that we could just do. So, I backed off, but over the years the provosts have put in a great deal of effort to recruit faculty to their colleges. They have receptions. They encourage new faculty to come. In honesty, I don't know the answer to the question about what percentage of our faculty are currently affiliated. That's a good question. I probably should know the answer. I care about the answer. If the answer is 90 percent, then I think we've done our job. If the answer is 60 percent, then I think that it's time to reconsider the policy and be a little bit more activist. Just because a faculty member is affiliated doesn't necessarily mean they have all that much more work to do. The amount of work that a faculty needs to do in a college depends upon their level of commitment. Some colleges have explicit requirements. I don't know if they still do it, but in Cowell College, for example, the commitment that was expected of all faculty members was attending one dinner a month at one time, which I thought was not unreasonable.

Reti: Dinner, meaning a College Night?

Blumenthal: Yes. So, I think that's still an ongoing question. The reason I said it's a nasty question is because this is something I have thought about a lot over the years. I think all faculty should be in colleges, period. Let me just add that I also think that the college faculty have a responsibility because the college faculty are actually a Faculty with a capital F, which has a very special meaning within the University of California. It means that they have a self-governance responsibility. So, the college Faculty with a capital F are essentially a committee of the Academic Senate.

Reti: You mean each college is a committee within the Academic Senate?

Blumenthal: The faculty within a college. So, I think they have a responsibility in terms of the academic mission of the college, and oversight of that mission. My sense is that some colleges exercise that very well and some don't. Again, on some issues I'm not prepared to be the policeman and this is one. But I'll give you an example from years ago. (chuckles) Back when I was chair of the Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate, Lynda Goff was the vice provost of undergraduate education. One day she called me up, and she said that she wanted to reappoint Conn Hallinan³⁰² as provost of Kresge College, and could I please just sign off on that as chair of the senate. I said "No, wait a minute." I had heard through the grapevine that there were some faculty at Kresge College who were very unhappy with how the succession planning was going for the provostship at Kresge. And there was a group of Kresge faculty who wanted to take over the provost's house and use it as a women's center or something, I don't remember what maybe it was women's center. I don't remember the specifics. I had no opinion about whether that was a good idea or a bad idea, but I thought it was an idea that should be vetted. So, when Lynda called me, it wasn't truly out of the blue. I was aware that there was some controversy going on at Kresge. I basically said "No. This has nothing to do with Conn Hallinan. This has only to do with governance. And from my perspective—in fact it's explicit in the Santa

Cruz bylaws—the college faculty need to be consulted and to weigh in on the choice of the provost.”

Reti: Sure, that makes sense.

Blumenthal: I said I didn't feel that as senate chair I could wave my wand and say this had passed senate purview, since the college faculty with a capital F, are a committee of the Academic Senate—I know I'm playing the rules deep and dirty—but that was correct. I didn't really know Conn Hallinan at all—I barely knew him. This wasn't an anti-Conn Hallinan statement. I wrote him a note telling him exactly what I told Lynda, so that there would be no misunderstandings. I got back the most gracious email from him saying that he completely understood. He thought I had taken an ethical, well-founded position and he had no objections whatsoever to the position I had taken. I was very impressed. As I say I didn't really know him very well, but I thought he reacted very well to my note. From everything I know about him, he was a great faculty member who did superb job with journalism. He may have known that I'd already been trying to save journalism, unsuccessfully, on the campus back when I was senate chair, Wlad Godzich,³⁰³ the dean of humanities came in. And from day one, I was overwhelmingly impressed with him. Godzich is often the smartest person in the room. Really smart. He's very articulate. I was really impressed and I even said once or twice that if M.R.C. Greenwood ever leaves, he'd be my choice for chancellor. (That didn't last that long, but that was what I said at first.) One of Wlad's initiatives was to eliminate journalism and that, of course, came to the senate. I did what I always do. I went and I looked up the five-year reviews for the journalism program It was a journalism minor, but was a minor that had produced these great journalists like Dana Priest³⁰⁴ and Martha Mendoza.³⁰⁵ Oh, my God. And the external reviews were just glowing with praise for the program. So basically, I pushed

back really hard on M.R.C. with regard to the elimination of the journalism program because I felt it was inappropriate to eliminate them.

Reti: Why did they want to eliminate journalism?

Blumenthal: Money. Resources. Conn, I think was approaching the end of his career and they'd have to hire new faculty in that area. I think Wlad wanted to reorganize the humanities division into other areas. But I just felt like we were giving up something so important and so good. So, I tried to be the great defender of journalism. And, of course, I failed. And it wasn't my call. This is the administrative call, at the end of the day, to not put the resources in there to keep that program going. I thought at the time, and I still think it was a mistake, but that was one of my experiences of academic politics.

Reti: There are two other programs that experienced controversial cuts during your years—one is Science Illustration and the other is the Arboretum.

Blumenthal: So, let's start with the arboretum. The Arboretum had been overspending its budget for a long time. And there were serious questions about the leadership and the direction of the Arboretum. So, while she was still vice provost for academic affairs, we put the Arboretum under Alison Galloway. Alison was quite supportive of the Arboretum, as a matter of principle. I think she gave money to it. She really cared about it. But she was also quite disdainful of the way the Arboretum was operating and running.³⁰⁶ The arboretum was running deficits, major deficits, not as big as Shakespeare Santa Cruz, but still there were deficits. This was in the 2008-2009 timeframe. This was at a time when we just couldn't allow that to happen. I didn't make individual decisions about the Arboretum, or Science Illustration, for that matter. But I supported them, because in the case of the Arboretum I felt as though that was not core to our mission. It was an important part of community relations. I thought it was something that needed to

continue. There was never any question of paving over the Arboretum. That was not even a glint of a thought, but it was clear that the operations at the Arboretum had to change. I think it is fair to say the Arboretum is something that serves a role for community relations, a huge role there. It also serves an important role as a laboratory for some of our faculty to do their research. And it serves as a place where some of our students get involved as well, in terms of the operation and research at the Arboretum, frankly more students than in Shakespeare Santa Cruz. So, I think there is no question that the Arboretum was an important part, and a valued part, throughout the University of California, Santa Cruz. But things needed to reform and some changes needed to be made. There were some managerial issues with regard to the Arboretum. I was really quite content to leave this in Alison Galloway's hands. Then when she became EVC, she was the decision maker on the resources for the Arboretum. I might add she remained personally very committed to the Arboretum as EVC, even if she did cut their budget. So, I think there were two separate lines of issues. One was the issue of the importance of the Arboretum to the Santa Cruz campus, but the other issue was the effective use of resources and what was being done and how it was being done. There were some serious questions there.

Science Illustration was kind of a sad loss because, of course, it was connected and an adjunct to the Science Communication program.³⁰⁷ Science Illustration had evolved to the point of being primarily biological illustration, more than physical illustration. In fact, I think as a field, physical illustration has virtually disappeared. It's an important point to make. When I was a graduate student, or even a postdoc, or maybe even a beginning faculty member here, when I wrote a paper—if you look at my early papers, there's lots of figures in them. All of those figures were done by an illustrator. I would sketch a figure and I would ship it over to an illustrator and they would do their magic. They would draw

a figure somehow. They would use drafting table and stuff like that. All scientists did that. That's how figures appeared in papers and that's why they always looked so professional when they appeared in papers in those days. But by the late 70s, computer tools allowed us to draw our own pictures. There was a transition, and subsequent to that, anytime I had an illustration, a figure in a paper, I would just make them myself. I used Mongo or Super Mongo. Everybody else had their favorite program that they used. So, physical science illustration had been a major thing—when I was a graduate student in the physics department at San Diego, the department had its own illustrator. That's how much of a job it was. Here it was done by the Lick offices for us. There were illustrators around campus that did this job, and illustration for magazines and learning those skills was something that early science illustration did.

But that disappeared and so, the Science Illustration program had evolved into largely a biological illustration program. At a certain point—again, determined by budget cuts at the university— the Physical and Biological Sciences division had to make some choices. I think they made a wise choice to retain Science Communication, but they didn't feel that they were getting enough benefit from Science Illustration. I remember we had some conversations about it and everyone agreed that it was still a valuable program intrinsically, so we had some conversations with CSUMB. We were very happy to hand it off to them, and they were very happy to take it. I thought that was a win-win.

Reti: In between, they went to UC Extension.

Blumenthal: That's right.

Reti: Was your office involved in helping that transition as well?

Blumenthal: Possibly, but I think it was probably Alison who did that. I don't think I had a direct finger in that conversation, although I would certainly have supported it.

Reti: Yes, so both journalism and science illustration are programs that were run by lecturers. Those are relatively low-budget items to support. Lecturers don't make that much money. Are these programs cut because there's a lack of flexibility in laying off a tenured faculty person? The university doesn't have other ways of cutting money so therefore are lecturer-run programs more vulnerable?

Blumenthal: Well, certainly that is true. Lecturer-run programs are absolutely more vulnerable. The other thing that we've done is in some cases we take programs like this and put them in a division. So, in the case of Science Communication and Science Illustration, it's been in the science division. I think that most of the deans of the sciences would have said that science illustration isn't central to what we do. Even the biologists didn't use it all that much on campus. They'd do other things. It wasn't central to our core mission. Science Communication is a somewhat different matter; everyone needs to communicate better, and training students to communicate, particularly science students, is a really good thing. I think people saw that as more of a core function. But it still has largely lain outside of the basic core of what the science division does. It's survived because it's so important and so well run. So yeah, I think that's right. There's probably other examples on the campus too, of programs that were started or run by lecturers. Once something is soft money—well soft money is soft for a reason.

Reti: Okay, thank you, George.

Blumenthal: I hate to be hard-nosed about it.

Reti: I'm asking for an analysis of why it is that these particular programs end up being cut because certainly many, many students have come through those programs—like you say, with journalism being a great example, and gone on to make stellar accomplishments that put the campus on the map, that we point to again and again in our University

Relations publicity. And then we lose that because we cut programs like journalism. The same with Science Illustration. Many students have gone on to illustrious careers. I can understand the argument that it's not part of our core research mission, in a sense. But not just me, but the future reader of this oral history will be trying to understand these decisions. That's why I'm asking.

Blumenthal: I understand. But from a dean's perspective—they've got to fund the biology department, the physics department, et cetera. That's got to be their first priority.

Reti: These are hard choices.

Blumenthal: Yeah, they are hard choices. Isn't Science Communication run now by somebody with Security of Employment? I think so. So, in fact, it's on a much firmer basis in that sense.

Reti: All right. I'm glad to hear that. So, turning back to the colleges.

Blumenthal: I don't have a lot to say about Merrill College. The Merrill College refurbishment was one of the major projects we did. From where I sit, it didn't seem all that controversial, or all that difficult. It was a good project. I saw it as something that needed to be done. I was delighted to help get it across the finish line for approval. I really love the way it came out. I think Merrill College improved dramatically as a result of that. So, it was really good. But I personally can take relatively little credit, other than being supportive, and maybe taking it to the regents, and signing the relevant documents, and agreeing to spend the relevant amount of money. I wasn't a real leader in terms of the conceptualizing of that project.

Porter College was a bigger deal because Porter needed a lot of work. So, we had to do some significant amount of work at Porter. And because we knew we needed more

housing, the needed work at Porter was done in such a way that we could add additional housing and additional rooms. I think we added one or two stories to several of their buildings in order to accomplish that. So, we did add a fair number of beds. Even though it wasn't a new college, or even a new building, we got a fair number of new beds out of that, which was a benefit to our students. I played a bigger role in that conceptualization.

And then, of course, we had construction issues at four of our colleges a few years ago, where there was construction work that had leaked water into the walls causing serious damage. Oh, my God, was that a pain. We had to fix those dorms, and then there were lawsuits as we sued the contractor and the architects. And then I had to bring those projects to the regents, and there were lots of concerns from the regents about why didn't we pay closer attention as these were being built, which is a legitimate question. It wasn't our practice to look over everything, since it was the contractors' responsibility to do that. On the other hand, the regents made the point that maybe a little bit of belt and suspenders would do us well in the long run. So that was a long issue and it was painful for the campus because we had to move students around. We had to close down things. It was a big deal, and we finally got it done, and we finally got a settlement with the contractors. It did cost us some money, but we got most of our money back. So, it ultimately did get resolved, but it was painful—a long set of issues in terms of reconstruction, getting approval, and then dealing with all the legal issues as we filed our lawsuits and continued them.

Reti: Now these renovations and expansions of these colleges—how were they paid for?

Blumenthal: Housing money. Typically, what would happen is we would pay for 10 percent of it from housing reserves and the other 90 percent we would float into a loan. That was the typical way we did these.

So that takes us to Rachel Carson College. The idea for that I think originated with Ronnie Lipschitz³⁰⁸ who was the provost of the college. As soon as I heard about it, I thought it was a fantastic idea. Then the Websters³⁰⁹ took me to lunch, hoping to convince me it was a good idea. But, of course, I was already convinced. (laughs) So it was a nice lunch. They loved it. I was curious. I decided to do a scientific poll. So, I walked outside my office. I collared the first ten students that I could find and I asked each of them if they knew who Rachel Carson was.³¹⁰ Nine of the ten did not.

Reti: Ouch!

Blumenthal: So, I thought was great. I think it was a wonderful educational thing to do for our students.

Some years earlier, Ronnie had the idea that maybe we should name College Eight after Congressman Pete McCloskey,³¹¹ founder of Earth Day. Ronnie felt that there were donors out there who would give a fair amount of money because they wanted to honor the congressman. But there was one problem. The one problem was this particular congressman had been accused publicly of being anti-Semitic. And so, the question came to me: is this something we should pursue, or is this something we should drop like a red-hot poker? So, I went on the Internet and I did some research. I spent a fair amount of time on it. He had been accused of anti-Semitism and the evidence for it was, at best, meager, and perhaps nonexistent. There was no really serious evidence of it. He, of course, denied it. There really wasn't any record that you could point to. This was just an Internet rumor. But it was known in certain quarters, particularly in Jewish quarters, where there is great sensitivity to issues of anti-Semitism.

I was a little bit flummoxed about what to do about this. So I brought it up at a meeting I had with Mark Yudof. Mark is Jewish and has been very active in Jewish organizations

his whole life. I thought, what better person to talk to about it than Mark Yudof? So, I talked to Mark. Mark had not known about the anti-Semitism allegations. His reaction was, “This is nothing to worry about. You’re not going to be able to raise the money anyway, so this is not going to be a problem.”

I said, “What do you mean, I’m not going to be able to raise the money? He said, “I’ve seen this before. Some politician gets a few friends and they said they are going to raise money to name something after them. And it never happens. They never are able to generate that kind of enthusiasm. So, they basically raise almost nothing. It happens time and time again.”

Anyway, Mark’s attitude was, “You can go ahead do it, but you’re not going to succeed. So, I came back and said, “Yeah, if you want to raise the money, you can raise the money.” Although what Mark had said to me kind of struck a chord because of Adlai Stevenson College, which is a perfect example of that.

Reti: Right. So, from what I’ve heard about Stevenson, they had grand ideas that there was going to be all this money that came in, but it ended up just being a few thousand dollars.

Blumenthal: That’s exactly right. Adlai Stevenson was greatly admired. I remember in Milwaukee when I was in college, one day I was taking the bus to the library. Remember, I worked in the public library. One day I was on the bus and I saw these two women and they were crying. They were in tears. So, I came over to them and I said, “Is everything okay?” They gave me this newspaper. On the front page of the newspaper was the headline, “Adlai Stevenson drops dead on London street.” And they were crying. I mean, that’s the kind of emotion that he brought about in people. In his generation, there were

people that had a huge emotional attachment to him. Yet they could only raise a few thousand dollars.

So basically, the Pete McCloskey thing went nowhere, but the Websters were prepared to put up real money for Rachel Carson College and one of our foundation folks was going to put up some real money too. But it was all tied together into this big complicated deal where we were going to get five million dollars to endow the college, and we were going to get an endowment for the college provost, and then we were going to get an endowment for the head of Science Communication, a presidential chair. We had already used up our allocation of five presidential chairs, but I knew that there were a few extra. That's matching money from UC President Janet Napolitano. I'll say more about presidential chairs later. We'd been allocated five and we'd filled them. Yet, we got one or two more because I'd gone and asked for one or two more. But now we'd come and asked for either one or two chairs associated with Rachel Carson College, and we'd been told that we were already too greedy. So, I had a conversation with Janet. I was prepared with all of the arguments. This was a complicated deal because it was the two chairs plus the naming of the college, and it was all a package.

Reti: And that was something that the Websters were asking for?

Blumenthal: Yes. As well as the other donor, Mark Headley.³¹² Mark and the Websters were insistent that we had to have the match or matches; I can't remember whether there was one or two. And so, I went to Janet. I had all my arguments laid out. Janet is a very logical person. She's a lawyer. I prepared my lawyerly brief to her to give my arguments in just the right way. But the truth is, as soon as I mentioned Rachel Carson College, she was sold. It was the easiest sell I ever did. She loved the idea. I didn't have to use my charm, my eloquence. None of that was necessary.

So, we did it. We had a great ceremony. It was the first naming in thirty years. It was a great event. It was one of my favorite events as chancellor, this naming event, because it was so meaningful to be able to name a college, and to name a college in a way that carried so much meaning. I thought it was fantastic. I'm very proud of it. When I went out on my road trip to speak to admitted students, I try to explain the colleges and give examples. The example I used this year is Rachel Carson College because I so love the name.

The Challenges of Fundraising at UC Santa Cruz

Let's do the campaign next. When I became chancellor, I'd had very little fundraising experience. And, in fact, it kind of amused me because my one great fundraising success was in astronomy. When I was chair of astronomy, I had a conversation with Joe Calmes, who arranged for me to meet with a foundation. They wanted to fund some students to do instrumentation work, and so they invited me to write them a letter asking for permission to submit a proposal. So, I wrote this letter to the foundation asking for permission to submit a proposal, and they just turned around and funded the proposal even though I'd never written or submitted a proposal. Well, you can say it was brilliant but I don't think that was the case. I'm sure I made a good case, but it wasn't a real proposal. I was so proud of myself: (laughs) I just have to sneeze in their direction and they are giving us money. Well, it turns out it was a real horrible pain to have done it that way. Because it wasn't a real proposal, all of the terms were written by the foundation. So, over the next several years, we had to comply with the terms of the gift. Because there hadn't been a proposal, because we hadn't really negotiated terms, some of those terms were really hard to comply with. I had to pull out my hair at times to stay consistent with the terms that were associated with it. So, this great success turned out to be a real pain in the behind.

I knew that there were going to be some challenges for fundraising. I knew that from day one, even from day minus one. I may have mentioned this already, but when Denice's memorial service took place—I think I talked about going to the lunch that was there—and one of the people I ran into at lunch was Garry Spire who was on the foundation board. He still is. He's an alum and a really interesting guy, and often a jokester. He's somebody with a great sense of humor and it's fun to joke around with him. But when I saw Garry at that lunch, he was angry. He was really angry at what he had perceived was a failure on the part of the University of California to put in place somebody who could do serious fundraising. He bent my ear about how ill-equipped Denice had been to do serious fundraising. He was mad about it. That's a mode I'd never seen Garry in before or since, for that matter. I've now known Garry for a very long time.

Reti: Had he been here during M.R.C.'s time?

Blumenthal: Yes, that's when I met him because I was an *ex officio* member of the foundation board when I was senate chair. I guess later on they stopped having the chair of the senate be on the foundation board. Maybe I ruined it for all subsequent chairs. (laughs) But at that time, that was one of the roles that the senate chair had to do.

Reti: Okay, so his critique was of Chancellor Denice Denton, not M.R.C.

Blumenthal: Oh, definitely. It may have been M.R.C. who recruited him for the board. I guess I should say a word about when M.R.C. was chancellor, the vice chancellor of university relations was Ron Suduiko. Ron was a really nice guy. He is a really nice guy. You have to like Ron. I interacted with him a fair amount as senate chair, as did Alison. And he was out of his depth here. It was clear that Ron was out of his depth, certainly in terms of dealing with faculty. His relationship with faculty was nonexistent. So, one of the things that Alison and I kind of informally agreed we would do was to try to bring

University Relations and “the faculty,” whatever that means, closer together. So, we spent a fair amount of time interacting with University Relations, more so than would normally be the case with the chair and vice chair of the senate.

The development part of University Relations had no relationship with faculty. And why would it matter for faculty to be involved with development? The point of the university’s development is to raise money to do stuff. Who’s doing stuff? It’s faculty. It’s the faculty who do research that needs support. It’s faculty who do the teaching that needs support. So, it’s all about faculty, at the end of the day. Virtually all gifts to the university somehow relate to the faculty. I had a sense of a lack of even understanding of why it was important to have relationships with faculty. There was a lack of knowledge. Again, it wasn’t a negative feeling. I liked Ron immensely, but I feel he was a little clueless about the role of the faculty and its centrality.

When I was chair of the senate, the Committee on Planning and Budget in the senate asked Ron to come and meet with them to talk about the budget for University Relations. M.R.C. took me aside before that meeting happened. She said, “Look, I need you to help me out here. I don’t want to hire a new vice chancellor of university relations. Don’t let them beat him up too much.” I did my best.

And then at a certain point M.R.C. decided to do a campaign and she hired a new director of development, probably associate vice chancellor for development, someone in the equivalent position of Jeff Schilling³¹³ now. That was Paul Prokop. Paul came here and I was immediately impressed with Paul. He knows his stuff. I didn’t know much, but he sure seemed to. I was really impressed. I felt Paul was somebody who’s really going to move us to the next level. Paul, however, stayed for something like two months, and then

he went to Davis. He's still at Davis. He's a good guy. I think he's been very successful at Davis. But he wasn't here. M.R.C.'s campaign went up in smoke as soon as Paul left.

So, when I became acting chancellor, Ron had departed. I think he went to the East Coast, where he does fundraising for a private academy. Donna Murphy had come in as the vice chancellor of university relations. I didn't hire her. Denice had hired her. Donna was really good. She was great with community relations and she pushed us on fundraising and did so in many ways. I want to credit Donna as a key part of the success of the campaign, even though she wasn't here for the end of it. She was definitely a key player. I want to give her a lot of credit for that, and she also hired Jeff Schilling, which I want to give her credit for because Jeff has been fantastic.

So, I came in and I realized immediately that there needed to be a cultural shift on the campus. Fundraising was not something that we, as a campus, thought about. It really was driven home to me when I was going around—I think I told you I visited all of the departments twice. Well, the first time I went around to the departments, my little ulterior motive—I had several messages I wanted to convey. One of my messages was that we were going to have to do fundraising in a big way. I remember one of the departments; I think it was in histcon, somebody there said, “Aw, come on. We've heard this from other chancellors before about how they were going to raise money for us and they never did.” I said, “Yeah and I'm not going to either. All I'm going to do is facilitate your raising money for yourself.” I was trying to convey a message that we would do fundraising. It would be a big part of what we do. Everybody had a responsibility and had a role to play. The second time I went around and visited departments, I found some had not changed, but some had. There were development committees. Astronomy, for example, put together a development committee which has been very effective.

But I knew relatively little about fundraising coming in. I was fortunate I got to work with some of our donors who helped me become much more sophisticated. I want to mention Anne Levin. The first ask I ever made as chancellor was to Anne. She was a real friend of the campus in the early days, a very nice person. I always felt highly supported by her, even though she didn't know me from Adam. Anne was an important person in the history of the campus and I want to acknowledge that upfront.

I did an ask of Narinder [Singh] Kapany. Narinder, I had known for years.³¹⁴ Narinder was a physicist who I got to know through Oakes College and Herman Blake. In the very earliest days of the campus, Herman Blake brought him in to work on entrepreneurship. They talk about being ahead of your time. That was Herman's idea. He wanted to instill a sense of entrepreneurship within the college and he brought in Narinder. Narinder had gotten his PhD from the University of London and he did his research on fiber optics. He is now known as one of the fathers of fiber optics. He's quite well known internationally. He's world famous and he's gone on to start many companies. He's been very active in Silicon Valley over the years. He still is. And so, he came in and started a center for entrepreneurship on the campus. He started working with faculty and encouraged faculty to start companies, in some cases. I wasn't interested in starting a company, but I enjoyed talking to Narinder. I really liked Narinder from day one, so we had a lot of interactions.

I have known Narinder now for probably forty-five years. But when I became acting chancellor, Narinder was on the foundation board, so he was a natural ally for me. I think there were a couple of endowed chairs that we got through Narinder. One was a chair in electro-optics, in engineering, which he endowed. And the other was a chair in Sikh studies. That was an interesting chair because the money didn't come from Narinder. It came from some other donor. The money had been given to UC Irvine and established an endowed chair there, but the chair was so restricted in terms of its mission, that Irvine

didn't use it. Ultimately, the donor asked to withdraw the contribution and instead he gave the money to us. We kind of redesigned it. I think it was really Narinder who brokered that deal. Nirvikar Singh sits in that chair today. While she was alive, Narinder and his wife, and Kelly and I would periodically have Dim Sum brunch together. So, I have had a long relationship with Narinder. He's ninety-one or ninety-two now. I was at his ninetieth birthday party. It was not too long ago, a year or two ago. And he's still going strong.³¹⁵

Reti: Wow, and Herman Blake was one of the very few early faculty members and provosts here who did have a commitment to fundraising and was very effective.

Blumenthal: Yes, exactly. In this case he was pushing entrepreneurship, but he was also thinking about fundraising and was very effective. I think it says something about Herman. Herman knew all kinds of people.

I also worked with Jack Baskin³¹⁶ and Peggy Baskin. Of course, Jack was a longtime donor to the campus. I think I told you the story about how Jack got the School of Engineering started. And Peggy Baskin, of course, taught here briefly. We had a very good relationship. Jack is an experienced guy. He helped introduce me to the world of donors and philanthropy. So, I had good people helping me along.

One of the things we did fairly early was we put in place training for faculty and administrators to learn how to make asks. We put in place some courses. The final exam was you had to go make an ask. Kelly took the class. All of the deans did. A whole bunch of faculty did. I got a lot of positive feedback from faculty about the class. So, it was a good experience, but that was a part of my thinking about culture change on the campus. I wanted some ambassadors. I would have been willing to pay for training for every faculty member on campus, but every faculty member wasn't willing to do that.

Reti: Yes. So, speaking of culture change—

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: When I think about the barriers that UCSC has faced in terms of fundraising, one of them seems to be the so-called hippie roots of the campus, and this kind of anti-capitalism feeling, you know, a feeling that fundraising is evil because it intersects with all of that. So, you're facing that, right, as a culture?

Blumenthal: Well, we continue to face some of that from students, who regard that as just selling out to the capitalistic oppressive 1 percent. Yeah, there is still some of that. I don't really see that anymore from faculty, but I did see it from faculty at the beginning. Faculty—they're professionals; they're rational; they want money. So, there is at least a competing force there; particularly if they see other units being successful, they don't want to be left behind.

Reti: Yeah. Okay, so that's one issue. Another issue that I can see is we are a young campus and for long time we didn't have a large alumni base. We had a bunch of alumni who had anti-capitalist values and weren't getting rich. This is probably true, in some ways, of the other younger UC campuses as well.

Blumenthal: I think more so for us because of the culture of the student body of our campus. Yes, some of our early alums became quite wealthy, but we probably have a higher percentage of alumni who went into public service, and you don't get wealthy in public service. I think that was a disadvantage. I don't remember the numbers now anymore, but I think we currently have something like 110,000 to 120,000 alums. I haven't looked in the last two years, so this may have changed, but the median age of our alums is thirty-five.

Reti: Wow. Because in in the early years we had so few students?

Blumenthal: You've got it. Enrollment has gone up so sharply over more recent years. Most of our alums are recent alums. It may have gone up. It may be now thirty-seven, or something.

Reti: And those alums are not at the age when they have a lot of capacity to donate.

Blumenthal: Yes. If you looked at Berkeley, for example, I'm guessing the average age of their alums is probably fifty-five—a big difference in terms of where they are in their careers in terms of donor capacity. So yes, that was a second issue that works to our detriment.

The third issue I guess could work to everyone's detriment [at other UC's], but you still have to overcome it, is this feeling by many people that I gave at the office. "I pay taxes, so therefore why should I have to pay twice for a university?" I understand that. On the other hand, part of the message is how little we get from the state anymore.

So, we had to fly in the face of all of those challenges.

Reti: And there's another one too.

Blumenthal: Yes?

Reti: The location of this campus in a semi-rural area. Certainly, there is a desire to go after Silicon Valley money but there are other campuses in that vicinity who are drawing from the same pool.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I would have framed the locational challenge in a slightly different way. I think it was multifaceted, the locational challenge. First, we have failed and I

probably would say continue to fail, to do a really good job in Monterey. So, we can go north, but we haven't really done very well going immediately south.

Reti: I agree with you completely.

Blumenthal: We just have not done a good job in Monterey, in terms of the capacity that really is there.

The second challenge is that when I became chancellor and I looked at our fundraising operation: oh, my God, it was almost entirely directed at Santa Cruz. My reaction was, we have squeezed every drop of blood out of that particular turnip. It makes no sense to put additional resources into fundraising in Santa Cruz. This is not where we should be looking.

Reti: You've got like ten people who are really big donors around here.

Blumenthal: Right. And we need to look elsewhere. We need to expand to San Francisco, to Silicon Valley, and to Los Angeles. And we've done that. We've, over the years, put people in Los Angeles and in Silicon Valley and in San Francisco, so that we have decent fundraising operations in those locations, and now in others as well. One of the first things I did is I started going to New York and developing relationships with some of our New York people, alums specifically. There are some amazing alums in New York. Now we've raised a fair amount of money from New York. But in the case of New York, it was repeated visits from the chancellor that really made a difference. People really noticed that.

So, I felt as though we really needed to expand our horizons a lot, and if anything, decrease the resources we put into Santa Cruz fundraising and put those elsewhere. So yeah, the geographical challenge was an intense one.

I was fortunate that when I came in as chancellor, the chair of the foundation was Anu Luther. Anu had at one time been a faculty member here in economics. But she left and she married somebody who became a very big entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, who died. Sid Maitra³¹⁷ was his name, and he died in a tragic air crash. So, she ended up running the company that he had founded and led. But she was the chair of our foundation. Anu is a very strong-willed woman and she had in her mind that one of the things we needed to do was raise more endowed chairs. When I became chancellor, we as a campus had fewer endowed chairs than UC Merced had on the day it opened. We had like eighteen endowed chairs. I believe that Merced had more. We had not been successful in getting endowed chairs. One of the things I'm particularly proud of is that we've more than doubled the number of endowed chairs in the last thirteen years. Now it's roughly forty. I think that's really important. This started with Anu. She made it one of her goals as chair of the foundation to get five more endowed chairs. I don't remember specifically whether that was successful. I think we may have gotten four chairs rather than five, but it didn't matter. The point was she concentrated on chairs and that's what we did. Anu and I worked together and we got some chairs. We started that change and I really want to credit Anu with the vision to move in that direction. I adopted her vision wholeheartedly and kept it going.

So I was committed almost from day one. Even when I was acting chancellor I knew we had to do our first comprehensive campaign, but I also knew I couldn't do it as the acting chancellor. But as soon as I was appointed, literally the day I was appointed, I immediately realized this is the first day of the campaign. I knew this is something we had to do as a campus. We didn't start it immediately but I was committed to doing it. To tell you the honest-to-god truth, I didn't really know what a campaign was at the time. I didn't even understand fully at the time why one does campaigns.

The Campaign for UC Santa Cruz

All I knew was that most universities did campaigns and that Santa Cruz had never done one.³¹⁸ And if most universities were doing them and we weren't, then we probably should be. But at the time I'm not even sure I understood deeply why that was important. I do now, of course. I just knew we had to do it. If we were going to be a world-class university, we've got to do stuff world-class universities do. I'd love to tell you my reasoning was more sophisticated than that, but it wasn't. Now of course I understand that campaigns allow you to focus your energies on fundraising in ways that you wouldn't necessarily be able to do in steady state, and that the goal of a campaign—yes, you set a fundraising goal—but the real goal of a campaign is to double your steady-state fundraising. Successful campaigns—after the campaign is over, they are raising twice as much money per year as they did before the campaign. So, it's a way of pushing yourself and your constituency to up your fundraising.

Reti: So, can you define a campaign for me.

Blumenthal: It's an intense period of fundraising, usually with a goal.

I didn't know beans about how to go about starting a campaign. So, I figured we've got to know a substantial list of projects to raise money for. (laughs) I was so naive. So, what we did is we sent out requests all around campus, to every unit on campus, asking what would be your wish list in a campaign. Sure enough, we got responses. We got lots of responses. In fact, we got thick notebooks full of responses. (waves arms) I'm showing two-foot high notebooks. So, we tried to filter those through the divisions and the deans, or the unit heads in the case of the library, so that we could use the deans as kind of a filter to help whittle down what we were getting back into a manageable form. But even so, we still had huge, huge wish lists from the divisions on campus.

I went around to websites of other universities and looked at their campaigns. Stanford basically had a campaign that had a fancy name and it said, well we're going to raise a lot of money and we're going to get a scholarship for students and do other good stuff. That was the Stanford campaign. They didn't say a whole lot more than that. I may be overstating it slightly, but not by a lot. On the other hand, there was an expectation here that we would identify specific projects that we were going to make campus-wide priorities. So, it wasn't as simple as saying we're going to do good stuff. We needed to identify what we were going to be raising money for. And at the time, that was actually a huge challenge because you want the campus-wide campaign to be as broad as possible to include a lot of people under the tent. But it has to be as specific as possible, so that you have a clear ideas of what you're raising money for.

Reti: And is that difference between us and Stanford a culture difference?

Blumenthal: I think it is the difference with an organization that does fundraising by just sneezing. They don't have to do anything and money rolls out of the pockets of their donors, versus us, where we have to do everything exactly right and offend no one. We have a much higher bar.

So, I struggled for a while and one of the things I did is I decided to hold a series of dinners for faculty. So, I held maybe fifteen dinners for faculty members, where we would bring in maybe ten or twelve faculty members to have ideas and express ideas about what might be themes for a campaign that would work for Santa Cruz. There were really interesting ideas that came forward. Most of them were not ideas that could serve as the central basis for a Santa Cruz campaign because the central issues needed to be much more broadly campus-based rather than divisionally based. We were going to raise money for individual

programs and divisions, but we needed some anchor points that would be campus-based anchor points.

Reti: I have a question about the interface between the campaign and budget, or academic planning?

Blumenthal: Most of the things we're raising money for are things that we wouldn't have done otherwise, so it didn't interface all that much with the budget.

Reti: All right. But I guess what I'm wondering if you run the risk of having essentially a campaign driving the academic planning for the university.

Blumenthal: Oh, yes. I understand what you're saying now: Is the campaign driving the academic plan? There was an academic plan that David Kliger had put in place. It wasn't real directive in terms of where we were going. It was nothing like the academic plan that we have now. The academic plan wasn't all that helpful in identifying where we're going. I might just add that I've left a great gift, or maybe Marlene has left a great gift, for our next chancellor and the next campaign. Now we have three pillars of the Strategic Academic Plan.³¹⁹ I think they are the three obvious things to base the next campaign on. I would add to that a student center, to make it four things. And then that's the campaign and it's done. So, all this agonizing that we did the first time, you can just skip that complete step and get right to it and it's because we have a meaningful, meaty academic plan.

But we didn't have that then, so I was struggling and it was tough to come up with ideas. I'm not sure that's my strongest suit. Meanwhile, while this was going on, we had to assess the campaign readiness. The way you do that is you bring in an outside firm. We brought in one of the standard firms to do a campaign assessment and that was interesting because, of course, they identify what you need to invest in in order to have a campaign.

So, it was going to cost us money. There's no doubt about that. Their report was going to help us figure out where we needed to invest.

Reti: In terms of paying people who were going to be professional fundraisers.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: You weren't expecting the University Relations staff to be going out doing these asks. These were going to be other professionals who were hired specifically for this campaign.

Blumenthal: Right, well we already had some of them, but we were going to need a bunch more.

Reti: You couldn't put that kind of workload on the small staff.

Blumenthal: There wasn't enough staff to do this in a meaningful way. The assessment also was to assess how much money we could raise. They did some amazing things. I was really impressed with their work. They went to various constituents. They did a lot of work in Silicon Valley and other places. They met with people who had affiliations with the campus and they met with people who had no affiliation with the campus. And they did interviews and from those interviews were able to assess how likely each of those people were to give a gift and what the magnitudes might be. This was a whole new world to me, to see what they did. I'm often skeptical. In this case, I was quite impressed.

Anyway, they came back and they said that they thought we could do a campaign of 250 million dollars if we push it. And so, I, having heard that, made a decision to do a 300-million-dollar campaign. I wanted to push it a little further, a little harder. I have no insight here. This was not brilliance. This was not stupidity. Or maybe it was stupidity because I didn't know anything. I just wanted to push a little harder than they were telling

us we could push. And so, I made the decision of 300 relatively early based upon a minimum of good arguments.

Donna Murphy played a key role in moving us forward at every step. She always was pushing us forward. And relatively early in the campaign the person who was the associate vice chancellor left and we hired Jeff Schilling. That was really a sea change. Jeff came from Stanford and he had a lot of experience. Jeff is a very level-headed guy. He relates well to people and is very sensible about fundraising and what you can and can't do. He was the perfect person for this campus, to lead that kind of an effort. A lot of our success we owe to Jeff Schilling.

But I still had to get to those damn themes. So, I finally came up with some themes. I started with five themes for the campaign and I started circulating them to people here, to the cabinet, to the deans, then to the foundation. It was starting to get a little bit of momentum and then I got a call from Gary Novack. He and Richard Moss³²⁰ and Gordon Ringold³²¹ wanted to have dinner with me. Richard was going to fly up from L.A. and Gary would come down from Novato. So, we had this dinner in Los Gatos and basically their message to me was, your themes suck, and you've got to do better. (laughs) They were very clear and I heard their message. They weren't quite as gross as that. They were much more diplomatic because they're having dinner with the big cheese chancellor etc. But basically, that was their message. I heard it. I felt that we had to take that criticism seriously. So, I went back and I talked to Donna and others. We tried to hone the themes and to take into account some of the concerns that the foundation folks had expressed. But I think we finally got moving forward one day when I had a meeting with Alison. It was just the two of us and we met for two or three hours in my office. We opened up the whiteboard behind you and we started just jotting down ideas. We basically came up with what became the final themes, on that whiteboard.

And so, at that point we were pretty much ready to go forward. One theme was the Institute of Arts and Sciences. One was the Genomics Institute. One was support for coastal health. The other one was something about student support; I don't know exactly how we worded it anymore. We could look them up. But then we had our themes and we were ready to go. (whew!)

Then we had to start. I did a lot of meetings. I met with a lot of alumni all around the country, did a lot of traveling, met with every single conceivable group of alumni or potential donors. I tried to do this as broadly as I could, around the country, to alert them to the campaigns, show some enthusiasm for the campaign. Of course, some people gave a lot of pushback: why aren't the colleges there explicitly? Why are two of the three programs science and even the other one, arts and sciences, is half science. I got a lot of pushback on that. But most people were pretty receptive, and I think, by and large, they went quite well. But whenever you have a bunch of Santa Cruz alums in the room, you're always going to get some level of skepticism and pushback. It's inevitable. And that happened as well. But we kept it going. It took a lot of effort. I put a lot of effort into that.

We needed to bring in an advertising firm. So, University Relations brought in one of the standard advertising firms that higher education institutions use for campaigns. They came and interviewed all of us a couple of times, and they went off to do their creative thing. They came back with, I think, like four or five ideas for how we would frame the campaign. I remember that meeting well because I was in Kerr 212. I was so unimpressed. I literally sat there looking at each one of their proposals and all I could think of was this could apply to any university in the country. This is generic. This is off the shelf. This is not something that's unique to us. Every single one of their proposals was of that nature. So, I decided to accept none of them.

Meanwhile, Sheldon in social sciences had brought in an alum, Larry Rowen,³²² who owns a business called Fly Communications in New York City, which does advertising. He brought them in to do some advertising for the social sciences division. Larry, who's an alum and feels a deep affiliation with the campus, did this film for social sciences which was fantastic. If you haven't seen it, you should. It was a film on social sciences at Santa Cruz. It's probably ten years old. I watched it and we even made a point of bringing it to the foundation board, which had been really skeptical of a lot of the work we were doing on communications at the time, very skeptical. But they loved it.

I was unhappy with the ads for the campaign. But I liked this Fly Communications thing, so we decided to bring in Fly Communications and see what they could do. They didn't do universities.

Reti: But here is somebody who knew the university.

Blumenthal: They knew the university, yes. I've since become friends with Larry. I like him a lot.

Anyway, we invited Larry in and Larry did lots of interviews with all of us—students, faculty, staff, administrators. Then he came back for a second round. He came back and we had a day when he wanted to present some ideas to us. He had, if I recall correctly, four potential campaigns that he could offer to us. He came in with these big posters and all kinds of stuff and presented all four. Alison was there, and Donna Murphy was there, and a few other people were there to hear all these presentations. He gave them all. It's interesting he told me later that there was one that he thought was, by far and away, the best one and he thought there was zero chance we would accept it. That was “The original authority on questioning authority.”

Reti: I was going to ask you about that.

Blumenthal: But I loved it. Alison loved it. And I figured if Alison loved it and I loved it, that was going to be it.

Reti: And he didn't think you would accept it because—

Blumenthal: It was just too edgy, way too edgy. In fact, recently they had a dinner for me in New York, sort of a going away dinner a few weeks ago. Larry was there. He was the emcee. Somebody asked if there was one word to describe me. He said “The word I would use is *brave*. I never in a million years thought that the chancellor would ever choose that campaign. That was the campaign we were the most proud of in my office. Everyone loved it in my office, and we thought there was zero chance that he would ever accept it.”

Reti: Yeah, and I'm sorry. I don't want to rain on your parade. I know some people I know are quite critical of that campaign slogan.

Blumenthal: Oh, I'm well aware of that.

Reti: They felt that it doesn't describe the current campus, or it describes the campus as it's disappearing. Some of what I've heard is you know, “We're cutting community studies as we're coming up with this slogan about questioning authority.”

Blumenthal: Oh, I've heard it all. Don't feel bad communicating that. A lot of the criticism I heard was that it's not literally true. We weren't the *original* authority. Campaigns don't have to be literally true. I heard all the pushback, but I still loved it. To me this isn't about protest. To me, this is about innovation, about creating new fields of study. This is about doing things in ways that are different than everyone else.

Reti: I will say, on the other side of things, when we interviewed some current students, a few of them said they came here because of that phrase. They loved it and they wanted to come here. So, it kind of works both ways.³²³

Blumenthal: Yeah. But as I say, Alison and I loved it, and that was good enough for me. I know that there was reluctance and we had a lot of reluctance to spend money to use it, etc. But we did. And the reason we did was because it was so good.

He had another tagline associated with that particular campaign that said “Give, don’t give in.” But I don’t think we ever used that particularly. I thought “The original authority on questioning authority” hit a chord. And it’s memorable. The visuals were memorable too. And as I say, he was the most proud of that. He said in his office, hands down, it was the most popular.

So, I had a discussion with Yudof about starting the silent phase of the campaign. It turns out at the University of California the president has to approve the silent phase and the regents have to approve the public phase of the campaign, which strikes me as strange. It strikes most chancellors as strange. So, I learned a little bit about the historical background, which is interesting. The historical background is that when the Master Plan of 1960 was put in place there was an agreement that the public universities would be fully funded by the state, and therefore would not need to raise money privately, and therefore there would be no private fundraising by the public universities. That was what it took to get the privates into an agreement on the Master Plan.

Reti: Because they did not want competition.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: Fascinating.

Blumenthal: So that was the agreement. But, of course, it didn’t take that long before the state stopped fully funding the university. Relying on state funding became what Chris Edley once described as faith-based fundraising. (laughter)

And so, the regents decided that since we were going to have to fundraise, the burden of violating the Master Plan should live with the regents, not with the chancellors. So, it was actually to protect the chancellors that the regents' approval was required.

Reti: That's quite interesting because Dean McHenry was one of the architects of the Master Plan. And by the time he opened this campus, he was already talking about private fundraising. So, a couple of years later—

Blumenthal: It didn't take long.

Reti: That idea of not fundraising lasted about five minutes.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So, we needed to get a campaign committee together early on in the campaign. The way it usually happens is there's a foundation board. But there's also a campaign committee, independent of the foundation board. That's what Jeff and Donna wanted us to do. The problem is we didn't have a whole pile of rich donors that we could go to. Who had gravitas who could lead such a committee? We had one person. That was Steve Bruce. Steve was an interesting person because Steve became a donor in a very interesting way soon after I arrived. He called University Relations one day out of the blue. They'd never heard of him, or heard from him previously. He was an alum. He said, "I want to give a gift to the campus." They said great. He said, "I want to give a graduate fellowship in the name of Bob Meister to politics because Meister was one of my professors and I really liked him." So, they said great. We arranged it and it was done.

What Steve told me later was that this was kind of a whim. He had made a decision before he had finished dialing the phone that if it went to an answering machine he wasn't going to follow up—he'd just let it drop. But if it was answered by a person he would make a big donation. And it was answered by a person, so he did make a donation, and he's been a donor since then. He is on our foundation board still. Steve, I felt, had the gravitas; and

he's an investment manager, a really good man, and the right person to do it. So, I made a trip to L.A. for the sole purpose of twisting Steve's arm to be the head of the campaign committee, and failed. He was just starting a new hedge fund at the time, an international hedge fund and he felt he didn't have the time. It's fair. But once he said no, I realized we had a big problem because we didn't have the kind of person who I thought could lead a major fundraising campaign committee.

So, we finally decided that we would do this through the foundation and use the foundation development committee as our campaign committee. That's not the way it's usually done. It's frowned upon for a variety of reasons, but we didn't really have much of a choice. And throughout most of the key points of the campaign, Linda Peterson, who's one of our foundation trustees from L.A. was the chair of the campaign committee. She deserves credit for having done a lot of work to make that campaign successful. I want to acknowledge that upfront.

So, the campaign tootled long for a while in the quiet phase. We were raising money. We were talking about the campaign; we just couldn't announce it formally. It's this little game that everyone plays. There's usually a big public announcement when you go public with the campaign, as though it had just begun, when in fact it's been going on for several years. The general rule of thumb is you go public with a campaign when you've reached somewhere between a half and two-thirds of your goal.

Reti: Because then you can say, "We've already raised X amount of money and there and we need you to help us meet our goal." Is that the idea?

Blumenthal: Yeah. So, we tootled along for a couple years. We're raising money. It wasn't hands-over-fist, by any means, but our fundraising was going up. There's different ways you can measure the amount of money you raise. The most naive way, and it makes

a lot of sense of a bunch of ways, is to figure out how much money you get each year and that's how much you raised. But that's not the way that campaigns measure fundraising. Virtually everything I talk about now, is in the mode of campaign fundraising. There what you do is you count the cash you raise, or the equivalent of cash that you raise in a year, plus you count pledges. So, if somebody pledges future gifts, you count those. You also count bequests. But you have to subtract off money that you collect as a result of a prior pledge. So, if somebody pledges a thousand dollars in 2019, you count it in 2019. But if they pay it in 2020, even though the money came in in 2020, you can't count that money in 2020, because you've already counted it.

Reti: You can't count it twice.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So, I think of that as the campaign way of calculating donations. And so almost everything I say will be in those terms, using that metric. It's standard. This isn't something we made up. This is the way people do it.

After two or three years, I remember it was in the spring, Donna came to me and said "We need to be able to announce soon and we're not anywhere near halfway yet. We still have to raise"—and I forget how many tens of millions of dollars it was to get to halfway—but it was in the spring that she said. "If we're smart we should be ready to announce in the fall, so we can associate our announcement with Founder's Day. But that means we're really going to have to ramp it up and raise a lot more money between now and the fall. So, what we should do is we should have a meeting of University Relations, and a few key faculty, and key administrators on campus. And you, George—you're going to have to be the cheerleader to motivate us to ramp it up, so that we can get ready to go public." I said fine with some fear in my voice because I'm not sure I'm the rah-rah guy, but we did it. We had this meeting and I did my best to be as enthusiastic as possible. I was secretly

skeptical that we could accomplish this. I really didn't think we'd get to the 50 percent mark by the fall. It was a big stretch.

But we had the meeting, and lo and behold by the time fall was approaching it was clear we were going to be close to half. So sometime in late summer/early fall, based upon what was coming in, I made the decision that we would indeed announce at Founder's Day. I was hoping we'd get to 50 percent, but I wasn't sure we would.

It was actually very dramatic. We arranged to announce at University House at an event. I invited Janet Napolitano down, so she came down. We had the foundation board there. We had lots of dignitaries, press, the whole thing. It was going to be a big deal, but we weren't at 50 percent yet. We were short by about a million and a half dollars.

The event was a lunch event. That morning I was on the phone with one of our donors, who had been contemplating a gift but hadn't decided for sure to do it. He had some concerns, and they were legitimate concerns, that he wanted to share with me. I was very open to hearing his concerns. But at the end of the day, he agreed to give the gift, and that put us over the 50 percent mark, so I could actually stand up and say, "Hot off the press!"

So, we got there. We got to 50 percent by Founders Day. I thought it was an achievement to get there, even to get within two million dollars of it. It was a wonderful event. We got a lot of good money out of it.

It was around that time that Janet came out with her Presidential Chairs Initiative. She offered a match for a million-dollar chair. She offered to put up half a million dollars, if the campus raised a half a million dollars for a presidential chair. She gave seven to each campus, and she didn't put a lot of constraints upon the areas that it could be in. It was our choice. There were some constraints about how the money would be spent, but it still gave a lot of discretion to the chair holder. So, we got these seven chairs initially. We had

them. All we had to do was match. A half-million-dollar gift was still a big deal for the campus. When I became chancellor, each of the divisions had a different level of requirement for a chair. Some chairs were three hundred and fifty thousand. There might have been a few that were half a million, among the divisions, but it was really quite low. And at the start of the campaign, on the one hand, I really wanted to raise a bunch more chairs; on the other hand, I wanted this to be a meaningful gesture. So, I made a decision relatively early in the campaign that we would require a million dollars for a chair, campus-wide, so a million dollars became the campus minimum. I think almost all maybe even all of the other campuses were already at a million dollars, so I was bringing us into accord with the other campuses. UC Berkeley was probably already at two or three million dollars for a chair. And so, we did. I did that. I just made that decision. Subsequent to that decision, Janet offered presidential chairs. A presidential chair is a very special chair which only requires a half a million dollars from the donor. So, it's a half discount, and then Janet fills in the other half million, with a constraint that some of the chair's payout has to go back to the campus. Not all of it by any means, but some of it. I don't remember the exact percentages, but that was the one constraint for a presidential chair. She wanted to encourage more chairs and she did it in a really good way by giving the same number to every campus.

Reti: So, there's endowed chairs, and presidential chairs are a particular kind of an endowed chair that Janet was supporting.

Blumenthal: Exactly. But from a donor's perspective, better to give a half million dollars and get a chair, rather than give a million dollars and get a chair. And you can still name it. The Websters had a habit of naming their chairs after other people, as did Mark Headley with Rachel Carson College. Mark Headley named a chair after a staff member at the Office of the President who had worked with his father. It's the only chair named

after a staff person from the Office of the President. You do get that freedom when you donate a chair.

Anyway, she gave us these chairs. I had the final decision on where they go. And so, what I decided to do, and I thought this was the good decision on my part—I said, “Look, I believe one of these should go in every academic division.” So, I gave every academic division one. I said, “The remaining two or three will go to whomever raises the money first.” I didn’t want to begin this effort as a free-for-all or first come, first served exercise because it might very well be then that all of the chairs would go to science and engineering, or maybe the social sciences, but the humanities and arts would have been left behind. So, I made that decision. I said, “Every division gets one. The remaining ones are first come, first serve.” I also gave a time frame. I don’t remember exactly what I said, but something like if a division hasn’t raised money for their chair after three years, then it’s fair game for anyone to go for it.

Reti: So, you can’t sit around and not raise your five hundred thousand dollars.

Blumenthal: Correct. Those are the ground rules I set. I felt really comfortable with those ground rules. And it turned out to be great. Every division quickly filled their chairs. We quickly got the extra two extras. We were the first campus to fill all of our presidential chairs, the first campus. I mean, think about it. We are a puny fundraising operation compared to most of the other campuses. But also remember that to Berkeley, or UCLA: Presidential chairs? Big deal. It’s a half a million add-on, something they could easily get otherwise. For us, this was a big deal. It was a huge deal. I have been prolific with my praise of the program when I speak to the president, because I keep pointing out to her, this was one of the greatest things she did for the small campuses. I think she should be proud of it and it had a great effect for us. And the fact that she gave the same number to

each campus meant that we got more than our fair share, as a percentage of the UC budget, for example, for students. So that worked well.

And then at a certain point, the president announced that this was such a successful program she was going to add to it. She added to it by creating additional presidential chairs. I think she added like ten or twelve, I don't remember exactly. They weren't given to the campuses per se, but you could meet certain criteria and qualify. I think we ended up getting like three or four of those ten.

Reti: That's amazing too.

Blumenthal: Right. Well, that's because I was so aggressive. That's why eventually I started getting notes from the staff up at UCOP saying, "You've already gotten more than your share. Don't apply for more." And then we still applied for more and got them. We were very aggressive and I think it's served the campus well. I bragged to you a few minutes ago about doubling the number of endowed chairs. A large part of that was because of the president's initiative.

Then before we went public—I forgot to mention this earlier—before we went public I decided that since I was going to use the Campaign Committee from the foundation, I should get the foundation's endorsement. So, I decided to formally bring going public with the campaign to the foundation board and ask them to endorse it. I knew they would debate it and stuff. But I was a little surprised by how much it was debated. And ultimately, they supported it strongly with one dissenting vote, Gary Novack, which disappointed me greatly, because Gary's a friend of mine and has always been a great supporter. Gary didn't think we had the ability to carry this out. That was his opinion and I respect his opinion. He was ultimately proven wrong, and I will give Gary credit because later on when we did finish the campaign, he was effusive in his congratulations for

getting it done. But I was disappointed that it wasn't unanimous. Ultimately, we finished the campaign early—six months early. We raised three hundred and thirty-five million dollars. So, we exceeded our goal.

Reti: That's remarkable.

Blumenthal: And we did it six months earlier. And we more than doubled our steady-state fundraising. The year or two since then our fundraising has been more than double what it was before the campaign.

Reti: To what do you attribute the success of being able to exceed the goal, and doing it more quickly. Future readers of this oral history might want to know.

Blumenthal: I think the answer is that we had some really strong supporters, donors that we developed. The Websters came to the campus almost by chance. I ran into them at a party. I knew Alec Webster, who had worked as a machinist in physics. He said, "We have this foundation that would be interested in giving to the campus." "Oh, great." I said. So, I put them in touch with our development people and they've given a lot of money to the campus over the years. So, strong support from some of our supporters. We were able to overcome some of the issues that we discussed earlier. Our alumni became much more supportive. And we got a lot of small donations as well. I think, at the end of the day, it was a combination of a lot of hard work, a lot of sweat. You mentioned earlier how much traveling I did to go meet with groups all around the country to support the campaign. I think it was all the work that all of us did. It wasn't just me. It was lots of people. We all worked very, very hard. I put a lot of time into the campaign. I think it was that effort.

Reti: Great.

Blumenthal: And as I said, I think we're set up for another campaign now. We're ready for it. One of the reasons in my mind for stepping down was that I was clearly not going to be here for the completion of the next campaign. We may as well have a new chancellor start it. I think we've left this situation where it's pretty obvious what the campaign themes should be. So, it's really only going to be flipping a switch to get it going. If I were doing the next campaign, I think our readiness says we can do four hundred million. I think if it were me I would go for five hundred, just because five hundred million is a nice round number. The truth is if you can't get it done in time, you simply extend the campaign until you get it done. Because everyone remembers your goal; nobody remembers when you said you'd get to your goal. So, I think it should be half a billion. It's nice round number. I'm sure it'll be successful. We're much better poised today. We have some really good donors on our foundation board now. I think that's good.

Reti: Well, it certainly seems that this is the future.

Declining Support for Public Higher Education

Blumenthal: Sadly, it is the future. But let me just say another couple of words about declining support for public higher education. You could ask the question: is fundraising going to be the way we extricate ourselves from the dilemma of declining state support for higher education? I think the answer is no. And it's just a numbers game. If you look at first, the magnitude of the problem—we now get, roughly speaking, in terms of our core mission of teaching and research, we get 40 percent of our funding from the state and 60 percent from tuition. So, we're no longer state supported; we're state augmented. Our tuition is already higher than we feel comfortable with in a public university. Politically, there's very little appetite for increasing tuition more. So, when we look at the gap—how much we need to increase the university funding—that gap is much greater than we would

ever be able to do by fundraising. That's true not just for Santa Cruz. I would make exactly the same statement for Berkeley. We're way short. Compare Berkeley to Stanford; compare what they do and how they raise money for it. Stanford has a huge endowment. Their pay-off on their endowment on a per student, or per faculty basis is quite significant. They have huge tuition. Yes, they discount it for many students, but they still collect more money per student in tuition, by far, than the University of California does. So, they have those huge benefits, and then on top of that, they have one of the top fundraising profiles in the world. Compare that to Berkeley, where tuition can't go up; it's pretty puny. We don't get that much money from the state. The fundraising per student—Berkeley may raise a billion dollars, but if you do this on a per student basis, Berkeley's is a tenth of what Stanford is. I made up the 10 percent, but the point is, they're far, far less than Stanford on a per student, or per faculty basis. So, it just isn't realistic for Berkeley to make up the difference and be competitive with Stanford based upon fundraising. Berkeley is competitive with Stanford, but Berkeley is competitive with Stanford because they do what Stanford does on half the money that Stanford has to spend.

Reti: So, you are talking about essentially what salaries are, how many staff there are, and that kind of thing.

Blumenthal: Yes. And it's even a little bit worse because in the donor community, 98 percent of the money we raised for our campaign was designated for something: scholarships, research, research on a particular topic. We got relatively little undesignated money. We did get some. I get money in the chancellor's fund. I tended to spend the chancellor's fund money on pet things that I think benefit the campus. For example, that's how I fund the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program. I think it's a perfectly legitimate thing to fund. I'm very proud of it. I try to share that information with the

donors to that fund how we spend the money, so that they know what they're enabling when they contribute. And I think it's really important that the chancellor have funds.

One of the goals we have going forward is for our fundraising to be much more general and nondirective, so that we have a little bit more money to play around with. Generally, our donors don't give money to the campaigns per se. They give money to programs that they want to support.

Reti: So, you want unrestricted money.

Blumenthal: I would like more unrestricted money.

I tend to think of fundraising as facilitating the ability to do those good things that we would love to be able to do, but don't have funding to do. It's the things that, I sometimes say, are what makes life worth living in a university. It lets you do those special things which you couldn't do otherwise. That's what fundraising does. It doesn't support core. It doesn't make us into mini Stanford's, but it makes the university a much better place.

Reti: Okay, so then the eighty-billion-dollar question is: what is the future of public higher education? If we can't make this up through fundraising, how are we going to survive?

Blumenthal: I just gave a talk in Berkeley on just that question. I think that the answer ultimately has to lie with the federal government. It's not going to happen during the Trump administration, or even the next administration, but I think we need to think long term about what the funding model for higher education is. Right now, in the United States, 70 percent of all bachelor's degrees are given by public universities. In addition, the United States has dropped from number one in the world, in terms of the percentage of twenty-five to thirty-five-year-olds who have a four-year college degree. Now we're

number seventeen in the world. And part of that has been the decline in funding for public higher education. The federal government funds higher education only through Pell Grants, through student loans, through research grants, and through a few very specialized programs, like Hispanic Serving Institution money, very specialized money. They do not do not provide much in the way of general support for higher education in the states. That all comes from the states, and the states are not a reliable source of funding for higher education. States have cut the budgets. Most states are like California and are not allowed to carry a debt. So, they have to balance the budget every year; they are subject to the ups and downs of the economy. The federal government doesn't have to do that. So, I think, ultimately, if we are to have successful public higher education in this country, the federal government is going to have to play a much bigger role. We can talk about how that role will be defined, and what that role might be, and what they might do—there are different models for how that might happen—but I don't see a way that we can have first-class higher education in the United States without more involvement by the feds.

Reti: We're increasingly seeing students taking on phenomenal amounts of debt to attend UCSC.

Blumenthal: Well, that's true although our students take on much less debt than those at comparable institutions. The average debt for students graduating from UC—half the students don't have debt; half do—and of the half that do, the debt is something like twenty-one thousand dollars when they graduate, which isn't horrible. The horrible debt comes either if you go to a private college where you can get a couple hundred thousand dollars in debt, or if you go to graduate school or professional school. We only paid half of my daughter's costs for medical school. We only paid half of our son's costs for law school. So, they both have debt; they have loans. We just felt that that was the right thing

to do, but they have sizable loans, despite the fact that we paid half. Could we afford to pay off their loans? Yeah but I want to them to understand—

Reti: Sure. So, you're saying that the issue isn't so much that students are going into debt to come to UCSC, but it's that that tuition money will not support this university in continuing the way it has because we just don't have enough funding.

Blumenthal: I do not believe that the current Board of Regents of the University of California will agree to raise tuition anytime in the next five years. I could be wrong. If we go through a major recession. I can imagine being wrong then. But there is no appetite—even though the budget currently being proposed for next year doesn't meet the cost increases of the university, even from Governor Gavin Newsom, who's been more generous than Brown. I think we are on a slippery sliding slope and unless something changes I think it will just go downhill.

Reti: Yes. Well, it's very important to get those thoughts on the historical record.

UCSC's Silicon Valley Campus

Reti: So today is April 9, 2019, and this is Irene Reti. I am here for my 29th session of the oral history that Chancellor Blumenthal and I are doing together, on this sunny morning in April. We're going to start today by talking about the Silicon Valley campus.

Blumenthal: Okay. Great. So, the Silicon Valley campus encompasses a bunch of things. It encompasses University Extension; it encompasses some graduate programs. It encompasses research activities. It encompasses what we now call Project Scout, that provides AP online courses and A-G online courses for the UC system. And it encompasses a startup area as well. So there's a bunch of aspects of the Silicon Valley campus.

But let me start from the beginning. When I came in as chancellor, one of the big, huge issues in Silicon Valley was University Extension. At the time, University Extension wasn't just in Silicon Valley. It was also located in Santa Cruz. And it was hemorrhaging money at a horrendous rate. Three primary factors led to hemorrhaging money. One: during the late 1990s, I think M.R.C. saw University Extension as a huge potential source of funding, and a big money maker and so we'd invested heavily in University Extension during the dot com boom. Then when the dot com bust happened, things changed dramatically. One of the factors was that they had rented facilities in Silicon Valley at a very high rental rate, which was what you needed to do in a boom period. When the bust came, we were paying very large rent compared to what the marketplace was, and we were stuck in leases. So that was one reason for hemorrhaging money.

Another factor was we weren't very careful about what kind of courses we were offering. The marketplace and the course offerings just didn't bear a close relationship. And I don't think it was a well-managed organization, in general. So there was a lot that needed to be changed. There was a lot of discussion in the Academic Senate about the need to close down University Extension entirely. The senate argument was this is losing money for the campus and we can't afford this. This is not central to our core mission and therefore why are we throwing the money down this particular rat hole?

The counter argument is that University Extension plays an important public service role in our community and in Silicon Valley, and that it interfaces with our educational role, and is something that adds to the general luster of the campus. So, you could argue this either way, but you couldn't argue with the fact that this could not continue to lose money like it was doing.

So when the previous dean of Extension left campus to go to UCLA, Dave Kliger and I thought hard about what to do. Dave consulted with several other deans of Extensions around the country about their perception of what would be a wise way forward. We agonized over it for a little while and finally we decided to appoint Alison Galloway as the dean of extension, in addition to her role as vice provost of academic affairs.

Alison took over with a lot of energy and she realized that there had to be a lot of changes. One of the first things she did is she closed down the Santa Cruz operation. Her perception was that this would always be a money loser and we just couldn't afford it. So she just plain closed it down, on the theory of let's concentrate on Silicon Valley where there was some hope of real progress.

And then in Silicon Valley, she imposed some real constraints. She closed down whole areas of course offerings that seemed not to be very promising, which had been losing money, and put in place a very different management style, more of a management style of a business—people have to show results or that unit doesn't continue to exist. That made a big difference and started a distinct move toward a balanced budget.

Within a couple of years, Alison had essentially a balanced budget. I say “essentially” because the way we keep books is if you show large deficits, we hold those on the books and expect units to pay the interest on those deficits and to pay back those deficits. At a certain point, fast forwarding five years or six years, I think Alison was by then EVC, we decided that we would simply erase the deficit, that the campus would assume the deficit because there was no way they were ever going to pay it off, so we were just playing with the books by keeping it there.

But I think very soon it became very close to a balanced budget in terms of what it could accomplish. That was a major achievement for Alison. Frankly, a major factor in my decision to hire her as the EVC was that success.

We also moved. When our expensive lease was up, we moved to a new location and leased a building, which we stayed at for a number of years. It was at a much cheaper rate. Ultimately the Irvine Company bought up all the land around our building and bought our building. They decided to tear down all of the buildings on the land that they had bought and rebuild new buildings in Silicon Valley. But of course by then, we were smart; we had gotten a long-term cheap lease during the dot com bust. So we were well-positioned with a long-term lease on property, that I thought was pretty good, and that we had done improvements on.

We did some negotiating with the Irvine Company to allow them to buy us out of our lease. In exchange, they sold us another building that they owned, which needed refurbishment, but we really got a good deal for it. We did have to pay them money—a fair chunk of money—but we got a much better deal than we could have gotten on the open market. So we turned that lease into our financial advantage and the new building is our current Silicon Valley campus. It's a great building and it serves us very, very well. It's already full. Marlene [Tromp] and I have discussed ways of using that building more efficiently so that we can use our space more efficiently. But the truth is, we know that the building's already full. We may be able to save a little space, but we're going to have to do something. That something means either buy another building, or do an addition to the building. But it is a nice building in a good location.

The way we purchased it is we used some of our century bond money. The UC system, a few years ago, had a deal where you could borrow money for a hundred years and pay off

only interest until a hundred years from now, at which time you'd pay a balloon payment. So several campuses did that. We did not. I'm very conservative. But then when the second opportunity to do a century bond came along, we decided to join in. We took a loan of 100 million dollars for a century bond, with the idea that we would just pay the interest. It was a really good interest rate, with the idea of a balloon payment at the end. Now for the balloon payment, what you do is you put aside money along the way so that the chancellor a hundred years from now doesn't wake up to a shock.

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Blumenthal: But that left us with a chunk of money burning a hole in our pockets. We used a good piece of that to purchase the Silicon Valley campus.

Reti: Yeah. This idea of UCSC being in Silicon Valley is—of course the campus originally might have been located in Silicon Valley—but it's now a very different culture and a very different context to be operating in. And so I wonder, maybe you're going to get to this, but what are some of the challenges of being in that different, more corporate environment, in terms of funding and all kinds of things than we have over here?

Blumenthal: Well, I'll get to some of that, also the reaction on campus to Silicon Valley. We'll get there. Save your questions. If I don't touch on things, I'm happy to get to them.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So as I said, it's already full. We moved some master's programs there and we're starting some new master's programs, which I'll get to in a few minutes. Project Scout is running full speed. Project Scout is a set of online courses that's offered to high school students for free, so that they can get either AP courses that are not offered at their high schools, or A-G classes that are not offered at their high school.

Reti: What's an A-G class?

Blumenthal: A-G classes are the classes you have to take to be eligible for either UC or CSU. And not all high school students in California can get the A-G classes, or get into the A-G classes. I think it's a real public service to California to offer both types of courses. I'm a big believer in the principle of Project Scout. The idea of that originated from a former vice chancellor here, Francisco Hernandez, who conceived it and then briefly went to UCOP to start the predecessor to Project Scout, which I think was called AP Online. He was the person who started it, and I think that's worth acknowledging.

We also have at the Silicon Valley campus an innovation incubator, which is intended to be a startup factory, in a sense. And we have new professional master's programs, or the so-called PDSTs. We have one in Serious Games that's been approved and is starting. We have one in natural language processing that was just approved by the regents. We have one coming in big data. We have one coming in human/computer interface. We're trying very hard to ramp up our professional master's programs in Silicon Valley. I think there's also an economics program there as well.

This didn't come easily. A few years ago, maybe five years ago, Alison and I decided to invest in Silicon Valley—we had thought a lot about the Silicon Valley campus. And let me just back up and say that the idea of a Silicon Valley campus originated during M.R.C.'s time. She was real big advocate for it. While M.R.C. was chancellor, she put together a Silicon Valley Task Force to look at what we might do in Silicon Valley. The task force was co-chaired by Bill Ladusaw and a now-retired faculty member in earth and planetary sciences, Gary Glatzmaier.³²⁴ I was on the task force. In fact, John Simpson even asked me to chair it and I turned that down. We spent a lot of time looking at what might be there because everyone had ideas. Some people thought: a new undergraduate campus.

Some people thought: move a couple of colleges to Silicon Valley. There were all kinds of ideas floating around for what the Silicon Valley campus might look like.

So we did a lot of research and we wrote a report. Our final report basically says, “Do what makes sense.” Because a lot of the ideas were just clearly not sensible. One of the things that made the most sense was using it for professional master’s programs because there are a lot of professionals in Silicon Valley. This is an opportunity to tap into that world and play a major role in their education. It’s not as though we have huge numbers of undergraduates who can go to school there, although we could consider that for a live-in population, people living at home in Silicon Valley. But I just could not imagine starting a new residential college in Silicon Valley.

Reti: That would be a major departure from the past.

Blumenthal: So that was one of the things. Another thing which I’ll come back to is the School of Management idea. But anyway, Alison and I decided that the real step would be to start some professional master’s programs in Silicon Valley. So we proposed to take some of the FTE faculty positions that were generated by rebenching and devote them to Silicon Valley. And oh my God, was that controversial. I don’t remember the exact numbers right now, but we were proposing something like eight FTEs (maybe it was ten), but I think it was eight FTEs for Silicon Valley to start a few master’s programs and see how it worked. A lot of people were opposed to it. In fact, there was a special meeting of the senate to talk about this issue, called by the opponents of doing something in Silicon Valley. So the entire senate meeting, from beginning to end, consisted of Alison and me in the front of the room talking about what our vision was for Silicon Valley and then defending that vision. There was a lot of opposition to it.

Reti: Do you remember what some of the arguments were?

Blumenthal: Why are we using rare faculty positions over the hill when we need them so desperately on campus, was one of the concerns. My answer to that was this was taking like 10 percent of the faculty positions generated by rebenching. If it was all of the faculty positions from rebenching, that would be a different story. But we were talking about bleeding off 10 percent. So that was one opposition.

A second concern that was raised was we didn't have a full business plan for everything yet. Well, this was a glint in our eye. I assured everyone there would be a business plan before we brought anything forward for approval. So finally, in fact, a resolution was put before the senate to not approve any program in Silicon Valley until there was a valid business plan, which struck me as silly, because we would have done that anyway. But there were a lot of people who spoke against it. I think the idea of Silicon Valley, for some faculty, was too much to accept.

Reti: And, for the future reader of this oral history who might not understand this cultural difference (Blumenthal laughs) perhaps we should explain. I mean, just imagine somebody 100 years from now trying to understand what was the big deal? How are Santa Cruz and the Silicon Valley different?

Blumenthal: Well, Santa Cruz is this think-outside-the-box place, where people are concerned about the progressive issues, about social justice, environmental issues—as being the ultimate issues that we should be concerned about. Many of them perceived Silicon Valley as a get-rich kind of environment. It's the corporate world. Did UC Santa Cruz want to get in bed with the corporate world, I think was ultimately the nature of the concern.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So we had this meeting. It was a very uncomfortable meeting. We were up on stage for two hours answering questions. I thought we had a good case to make. It was really funny because perhaps two weeks later we had a meeting with the president, Janet Napolitano, who was relatively new. It was one of our annual budget meetings. She came in with an issue. And her big issue was, why the hell are you so resistant to doing more in Silicon Valley—(laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Getting it from both sides, huh?

Blumenthal: As soon as she asked that question, I cracked up. (laughter)

Reti: “I just sacrificed myself for two hours—”

Blumenthal: I literally told her about the senate meeting we had just had. And as it’s turned out, we’ve now gotten several of those programs approved, up and running. I think Serious Games is beginning now, and Natural Language Processing was just approved. That was very dramatic, in fact. It says something about our regents more than about these programs. There are scores of PDSTs in the system, Professional Degree Supplemental Tuition Programs. They all have to be approved by the regents.

Reti: Supplemental tuition. What does that mean?

Blumenthal: Each of those professional programs does charge supplemental tuition.

Reti: This is true for professional programs in most places.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Like medical school.

Blumenthal: Yeah, it's like medical school. You charge extra tuition because it's a professional program and frankly, because it wouldn't exist if you didn't have that opportunity. It wouldn't be financially feasible.

Anyway, we had this interesting experience at the regents meeting in January. At that meeting only two PDSTs were up for approval. Usually it's a lot more. One was from Berkeley and one was from Santa Cruz. They both did presentations to the Committee on Educational Policy and Student Affairs. I wasn't at the committee meeting because I'd had some items on the Finance Committee agenda and they meet simultaneously. I wasn't worried about it because these things are always approved and I knew the faculty coming to the meeting would do a good job presenting it.

Well, it turns out in committee, the Berkeley proposal was turned down, and the Santa Cruz proposal was approved. (Reti laughs) I think the Berkeley proposal was turned down because it was deemed that they didn't take issues like diversity seriously enough, whereas the Santa Cruz folks had good answers on issues of diversity.

And so then normally what would happen is after it's approved in committee (it was approved unanimously), it would go to the full regents the next day as a part of the report of the Committee on Educational Policy and Student Affairs, or whatever it's called. It's usually approved pro forma, those things. It's rare that a committee report is discussed, or has to go through a formal, difficult vote. It's usually along the lines of, "I move to approve the A report," and the A report is approved.

So anyway, they got to that report. The chair of the committee, who was John Pérez, moved for approval of the report, and it was approved. I wasn't particularly relieved because I just assumed that would happen. And then two minutes later, suddenly John Pérez says, or maybe it was the chair of the regents who said, "Oh, I've just received a

motion to unapprove the report of the Committee on Student Affairs and Educational Policy because of the Santa Cruz item.” That motion came from the state superintendent of public instruction and it was seconded by the lieutenant governor. And the motion was approved to unapprove that report, which I assumed was a courtesy. I think one of them said something about the lieutenant governor not knowing she could vote on this, because I presume she wasn’t a member of the committee. This was before the whole regents, so she certainly could vote. It surprised me that she didn’t know she could vote, but that’s another story.

Anyway, it was unapproved. Then both the state superintendent and the lieutenant governor spoke about their unwillingness to approve any program that involves any addition to basic tuition. Their argument was basically an argument against all PDSTs and as a matter of principle, the lieutenant governor pointed out she had run for election on the idea of no tuition increases, and she wasn’t going to vote for any tuition no matter, no how, no way. But she also admitted she may not understand what these programs were.

So then, John Pérez asked (laughs) Michael Brown and me to come to the table so that we could defend and explain this program. So Michael and I came to the table. Michael had his big, thick book of all the stuff he had to present and he’s madly paging through it to find the item. I’m in a panic because I hadn’t prepared myself to defend this program. I had never imagined that I would be called upon to defend this program. So I was trying to formulate a defense. My defense was going to have to be generic because I didn’t know enough about the program to really defend it well in specifics.

But fortunately, as we were settling in at the table, John Pérez, as the chair of the committee, proceeded to summarize the program, to summarize why it was an important

program, to summarize why he strongly supported it, to summarize why PDSTs in general are a good thing to do, and then went back to the program and talked about all that it would add to the educational opportunity in Silicon Valley. He did a marvelous job extemporaneously—I'm sure he didn't expect to be defending it, either, but John is a very smart guy and he always does his homework. He gave this beautiful defense of the program. Then he turned to Michael and me and asked what we would like to say. (Reti laughs) And basically I said, "I completely agree with and have nothing to add to what Mr. Pérez has just said." Michael said the same thing. Then the regents re-voted and approved it with two dissenting votes.

In my experience, that has never happened before, that the regents have approved and then unapproved a committee report. Anyway, that's how one of those programs got approved. Our faculty have done a fantastic job putting together these proposals. I think they will all fly through. People have done a good job. There may be a few outlier regents, but our programs are better and more defensible than many of the others in the system.

One of the other issues that I faced in Silicon Valley when I came in as chancellor was that there was already a major effort to establish a school of management in Silicon Valley. This was a proposal that came from a large group of faculty, many of whom, maybe most of whom were from the economics department. At the time, Carl Walsh was the vice provost of Silicon Valley initiatives. I had a meeting with Carl before I was even acting chancellor, after I was selected but before I assumed office. Dave Kliger asked me if I would like to join him in a meeting with Carl. So I did. And at that meeting, Carl was going over the business plan for a potential school of management in Silicon Valley, and what we could do, and whether or not this made financial sense, etcetera. Carl did a really good job of laying out the issues. It certainly looked feasible. I asked a lot of questions. I know

Dave asked a lot of questions. And I remember at the end, Carl thanked me. He said, “It is so nice to see the chancellor taking an interest in these matters.”

So it was clear that this was something going forward. I knew there would be opposition within the campus to the idea of a school of management. I mean, think about it. We talked about this a little bit a few minutes ago, but the idea of a school of management is selling out to the business interests and the profit interests of Silicon Valley, which is contrary to the desires of many of the folks on campus.

Reti: Well, right, and harkening back to some of our conversation on Friday about the core mission being research—some of these programs—are they focused on research?

Blumenthal: A school of management would normally have UC faculty who would do research. So, indeed.

Reti: Okay. So the objections coming from the senate were not that these were sort of training programs.

Blumenthal: No, no, no. On the PDSTs, yes, but not on these.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: This one, the objections were: why do a school of business? Why sell out to the business interests?

On the other hand, the other side of the coin is, the Stanford Business School is a relatively small, although highly influential school. There is a San Jose State business school, a school of management. But we could do something so much better than San Jose State. We’re a public university, and providing a public university, UC-quality school of management would be a real bonus to Silicon Valley and something that could succeed.

Reti: Was San Jose State objecting to UCSC doing this?

Blumenthal: Well, I'm sure they weren't happy.

Reti: There wasn't an active campaign.

Blumenthal: No, no—even if they opposed it, it would have been challenging for them to stop us. Among my worries, that was way down the list.

Reti: (laughs) Okay, George. Sorry.

Blumenthal: No, no, don't be sorry. These are legitimate questions. I tend to prioritize what I worry about. That was not one I was worried about.

So there was a lot of resistance on campus. I knew that. But I decided that if we were going to do this, we really needed to move it forward. So I appointed Nirvikar Singh from economics to be special assistant to the chancellor on the school of management. He did have some experience. So he started putting together a group of supporters in Silicon Valley and he started putting together a plan for what a school of management could be.

Reti: So, pardon my ignorance, but is a school kind of like a division?

Blumenthal: Kind of like a division. But a school under UC policy is self-governing.

Reti: Ah. Okay.

Blumenthal: A school of medicine is self-governing. They can offer whatever courses their faculty want to offer. They don't have to go to the campus to get courses approved.

Reti: No CEP approval required.

Blumenthal: No CEP approval. If they want to admit students, their faculty play the role of the admissions committee for them. They don't have to go to the campus admissions committee to admit students. They're self-governing in that sense.

Reti: So this would have been a first for UCSC.

Blumenthal: Yes and no. The question is, would this be a first for UCSC to have a school?

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: And the answer is no in some sense, because we have a school of engineering. In theory, the school of engineering could admit students separately from the rest of UC Santa Cruz, just as Berkeley does, for example. We have chosen not to do that for a variety of reasons, one of which is that allows students to move more easily between engineering and other divisions, and it makes it easier to collaborate across divisions as well. I actually think it's a good thing that the school of engineering has not exercised its authority, that the faculty of the school of engineering – faculty with a capital “F” – have not exercised their authority to act separately from the rest of the senate. But they have that authority.

If we had gotten a school of management, it would have been a school, and probably would have operated relative to our campus the same way that the school of management at Berkeley operates, or the school of management on any other campus operates.

Nirvikar worked in that role for two or three years. He did a lot. He put together an advisory board of deans from other schools of management to help us conceive the curriculum and how we would proceed. He put together a group of local supporters in Silicon Valley who really wanted us to move forward. He put together a plan on what the

school would look like. And he tried very hard to work with people on campus to build support for a school of management.

But the resistance on campus was intense. Very intense. I supported it. I inherited it, so I kind of felt like I had to support it. But I supported it because I really did think it was a good idea to move forward. I came to realize that for it to really make sense in the long run, we needed a naming donor. We needed somebody willing to invest. I thought it was a good opportunity because most schools of management already have names on them. If you wanted to name a quality school of management, we were prime for the taking. So we did actually make some efforts in that regard, but we never got close to a big gift.

We continued this for several years. But it was also clear that there came a time when we were going to have to make a decision. When the crash of 2009 hit, that decision became much easier. We just couldn't afford to invest and to take a risk on a school of management in Silicon Valley at that time. So I shut down the process. Alison and I talked about this, and we decided that if we wanted to go forward with a school of management, the way to do this was sort of backwards. Since we already offered a number of management courses through UNEX [UC Extension], and since we had a number of economics faculty who could teach courses that would be in a school of management, the way to do this if we're really interested would be to offer a business degree, an MBA, which we could do without a school. Get an MBA approved, and once we had an MBA approved, if it was working, then try to build a school around it.

So that was our strategy. That didn't happen, either. Our priorities shifted. We saw other greater opportunities. But I still think that that's a viable path forward, and probably the path that this campus would have to take, unless we get a super gift. If somebody gives us

a hundred million dollars to start the Irene Reti School of Management—(Reti laughs), I think we could make that work. So that's what happened to the school of management.

UCSC and NASA-Ames Research Center

Okay. Now we need to talk a little bit about NASA-Ames. So, historically, before I became chancellor, there'd been over the years much discussion about collaborations with NASA-Ames in a whole variety of ways. I even remember as an assistant professor one time going over with Bob Kraft and a couple of other people. He wanted me to join them because I had all this background in x-ray astronomy, which is a NASA purview. So I had some NASA kind of experience. But I was a fifth leg on a table. (Reti laughs) But still, it was instructive to go over and participate in these talks.

Bob signed an MOU with NASA-Ames. Nothing ever came of it. We have individual faculty who do collaborations, but we really never had a significant formal association with NASA-Ames until we had the UARC, University-Affiliated Research Center. That was an idea that Bob Miller, who was then the vice chancellor of research, came up with while M.R.C. was chancellor. The idea was to propose to NASA a ten-year program in which UC Santa Cruz would serve as the external contractor for a lot of the work that they wanted done, but which they could not do internally. So it was not intrinsically a collaboration. It wasn't like a scientific institute, although there was a UARC center, so it was like an institute for a lot of the work that they did. So what they did is they moved a bunch of programs into this center, like air traffic control programs at NASA-Ames.

Reti: Air traffic control?

Blumenthal: They had one of the primary people in the world who studies that stuff at the NASA center.

Reti: Oh. Okay. I'm learning a lot today, areas that I don't know a thing about.

Blumenthal: They moved earth sciences from NASA-Ames, or a lot of the earth sciences into the center. They moved a bunch of programs into it and it became a very significant enterprise, which we managed for them. All the people there became UC employees. NASA gave us the money to pay them and we made a profit off the deal. So it was a profit center for UCSC. It was a ten-year contract. It had real potential. I think ultimately it suffered a lot from benign neglect from UCSC. It had been going for a number of years when I came in as chancellor. We had been treating it a little bit like a profit center and not nearly enough as a scientific opportunity for collaboration. I started hearing that from some of the people who worked over there. And I realized, you know, getting money is great. I mean, I'll always take money, but I was hoping for more.

And I also knew that a day would come when this would have to be renewed and we would need to compete for it. So I wanted to change this a little bit. What we did is we decided to take some of the profits that we'd gotten from the UARC center, and reinvest it in, for example, graduate student research assistantships, so that some of our graduate students could start to work and collaborate with them. So we did a bunch of stuff to try to encourage collaboration, particularly in areas like earth sciences, which was a natural collaboration, but also in some of the other areas as well. So we were definitely doing that. I think it was quite successful in terms of what we were able to do.

But there were other challenges. For example, at a certain point earth sciences at NASA-Ames decided they wanted to leave the UARC entirely. The earth sciences people at NASA-Ames wanted to remove earth sciences from UARC and handle it directly, because they figured they would save money by not doing this outsourcing to UCSC to pay the people who they were hiring in earth sciences. I understand that. On the other hand, I

didn't want that to happen because I thought that earth sciences would be crucial to the long-term success of UARC. So I literally went to the director of NASA-Ames and I appealed to him to stop them. And he did, because he wanted to further the relationship with UCSC.

Maybe I should, at this point, stop for a moment and talk a little bit about the director, Pete Worden.³²⁵ Interesting guy. It turns out Pete Worden is an astronomer. I first met him back when I was a young assistant professor, maybe in my first or second year, and he was a young assistant professor at the University of Arizona. He came up and gave a talk at Santa Cruz. I took him to dinner. For some reason, I couldn't get anyone else to join us, so I took him to dinner and we had a nice dinner together. But even in those days, Pete was known as a different kind of person. He was, at the time, I think, in the military reserves. I don't know how to say this delicately, so I'll just say it: his politics were thought to be quite right wing, so he had a nickname. His nickname was Nuke 'em Till They Glow.

Reti: Whoa. (laughter)

Blumenthal: So that was Pete. Soon thereafter, Pete basically went back into the military. He might have been in the reserves and he went full time, I'm not sure exactly how that happened, but he then became full-time military. He stayed in the military for many, many years, working his way up to become brigadier general. Pete was the main scientist who worked in the White House during the Reagan years on Star Wars.

Reti: No kidding.

Blumenthal: No kidding. He was the main liaison on Star Wars with the Pentagon. Then some years later, he was the guy who headed up the Pentagon Office of Disinformation. The Pentagon had an Office of Disinformation.

Reti: This sounds like it came out of Harry Potter. (laughs)

Blumenthal: And there was a big *New York Times* expose of it. As a result, the Pentagon dissolved the office and Pete retired. I think in the military, you get up to a certain point and if you're not successful in everything you do, you retire. That's the way it works. So he retired as a brigadier general, and a few years later he was appointed to be the director of NASA-Ames, just before I became appointed acting chancellor. We started at about the same time.

Soon after I became acting chancellor, I went over there to meet with him. We were doing the UARC, and Pete was interested in broadening the collaborations to involve UC trying to develop some land at NASA-Ames. I remember going over to meet with him and I had like seven things on my agenda to discuss in that hour. Pete and I greeted each other. We spent two minutes reminiscing about our pasts, and then we got all seven things done in twenty minutes. He is a no-nonsense guy who gets stuff done. I really, really appreciated that about him. I found him a pleasure to work with and very different than anyone else who's ever headed NASA-Ames. It was clear that Pete was going to be a good partner. It was also clear that Pete was very, very politically savvy. His politics did not show through. In fact, I suspect (I've never asked him this directly), but I suspect his politics have changed over the years, but I don't know that for a fact.

Reti: Did he ever know about his former nickname?

Blumenthal: I have no idea, no idea whatsoever. But at one point, I decided that he should meet Steve Chu, when Steve was director of Lawrence Berkeley Lab. So I arranged a meeting. But I did tell Steve what Pete's nickname was, which Steve found amazingly amusing. (laughter) Steve, of course, later went on to become secretary of energy under President Obama.

Pete definitely was a different kind of leader. He believed in getting stuff done. No bullshit, nothing, just get it done. We had some conferences that we arranged between Santa Cruz and NASA-Ames. Meanwhile, Pete was really interested in getting UCSC to manage and develop this land that they had at NASA-Ames, but which looked like it was undevelopable. So let me explain. NASA-Ames had this land that was, I forget how many acres, but it was a lot of land. The land had some environmental issues which the army or the navy had to clean up, so they did. It was cleaned up, but it had no infrastructure whatsoever—no roads, no electricity, no cables, no nothing. Our initial estimate of just the cost of putting any infrastructure on that land was 100 million dollars. It turns out that over time that rose significantly.

Reti: I'm sure. (laughs)

Blumenthal: It was initially 100 million dollars. They didn't have the money to do it and of course we didn't have the money to do it. But the idea developed that if somehow, they could lease us the land, and if we could find a developer to come in and develop it and front the money to build the infrastructure, then it would be possible, under current law, to let that infrastructure improvement be given in lieu of a lot of the rent. That was legal.

So the idea developed first that we would form a partnership with De Anza Foothill College, and hopefully San Jose State, and Santa Clara University, with us in the lead, to develop that land. We would form some kind of a limited liability company to do that, with us being the principals of this limited liability company. We would lease the land from NASA-Ames and we would bring in a developer and make this work.

Reti: And the end goal being what?

Blumenthal: The end goal being that some portion of that land would go to UCSC to develop ourselves, and this could be the land. Maybe we could get some buildings out of

it that would be our Silicon Valley campus. So, in a sense, almost a freebie. In fact, some of the initial ideas suggested that we could make a lot of money out of this deal. But dreams go up in smoke a lot, too.

I was working with Martha Kanter, who was then the chancellor of Foothill-De Anza.³²⁶ Martha later went on to become the undersecretary of education in the Obama administration and is still a good friend. I just saw Martha for dinner a few weeks ago, in Washington, D.C.

San Jose State was interested, but not all that interested. Santa Clara University was very interested; Father Locatelli,³²⁷ who was then the president, was very interested in pursuing it. So it was these four universities.

But we had a problem. (laughs) We had a few problems. But we had an immediate problem. Our immediate problem was this idea of using improvements in the land in lieu of rent was something that was going to go away. There was some congressman in Alabama who was really opposed to this. I think it's because he was the congressman associated with—I forget the NASA center of Alabama. —but the NASA centers are in competition and he saw this as a threat to his center. So he sponsored an amendment to legislation, which removed this right to use improvements in lieu of rental.

We lobbied against that bill unsuccessfully. We were trying to get this all done. I was in Washington. I met with a congresswoman from Silicon Valley, Zoe Lofgren.³²⁸ Our meeting almost got canceled, but I thought it was really important that I meet with her. So I arranged to meet with her when she was at the Judiciary Committee. I remember she introduced me to Congressman Wrangell.³²⁹ We had a conversation. She was very supportive but she was really annoyed that San Jose State wasn't in it. They had just

changed their president and he wasn't all that interested. I said, "I'll make another pitch, but I can't guarantee that they'll be in on this."

Reti: Do you know what their resistance was?

Blumenthal: They already had facilities. Why did they need NASA-Ames?

Reti: I see. So we needed it to expand our Silicon Valley campus.

Blumenthal: Right. And De Anza Foothill needed it, because they needed to expand as well.

Reti: And Santa Clara, what was their motivation?

Blumenthal: I'm not sure they needed it as much. But they were interested in high tech stuff, so they figured if stuff was going on there, they wanted to be a part of it. San Jose State wasn't all that interested at that time. So I remember I was with Donna Blitzer, who was our director of government relations in Washington. I think our meeting with Zoe Lofgren was our last meeting before we left, so we had that meeting with Zoe Lofgren. Then we got to the airport. And while we were at the airport waiting for our plane, we got a call; I think it was from Zoe Lofgren's office. Maybe it was to me directly. The message was very short, but the message was clear: San Jose State is now interested. I think Zoe Lofgren had called the president of San Jose State and told him that he was interested, although that interest didn't last long, because ultimately this bill passed and it was either fish or cut bait. This wasn't going to work if we couldn't get that.

So anyway, at the end of the day we got it done. It was like the right to do this disappeared December 31st. And we finished this in something like the last week of December.

Reti: Meaning you finished hammering out this agreement.

Blumenthal: Hammering out this agreement. Forming the limited liability company, and completing the lease. We did it all very, very quickly.

Unfortunately, this was also the time of the great crash.

Reti: Oh! (sighs) That has marked your entire tenure here, really, especially the early part.

Blumenthal: Yes. The timing really sucked. Had we gotten this done a year earlier, I think we could have really pulled off something important.

Oh, also, I forgot to mention that Martha and I had gone to see the guy who is the biggest developer in Silicon Valley. We had a meeting with him where we presented this to him. We wanted to make sure this made sense from a developer's perspective. So we had gone there. I was really impressed how smart he was because he thought it through, from general principles. He did some quick back-of-the-envelope calculations. I remember I said to him, "A hundred million dollars in infrastructure is a lot of money." His reaction was, "It's peanuts compared to the cost of real estate here. That's not an impediment to this project." He did some calculations. Then he said "Yep, you guys should go forward. This is a good idea."

Reti: Where was this land located?

Blumenthal: It's on the NASA-Ames property. It's the southern end of the NASA-Ames property. I forget the number of acres. It was like seventy-seven, or something. It was a lot of land. But he said it was a good idea. So we proceeded.

Then, of course, the great crash hit, and the great recession hit. And suddenly things became much more difficult. In fact, John, the developer, had said, "And by the way, when you do this, I want to be one of the people who can bid on this." He really was interested

in doing it himself, although a few years later, he wasn't, but that's because the economy had changed. After the crash, the land became almost worthless. Nobody was building anything in Silicon Valley. San Jose dropped out quickly. They had no interest. Santa Clara almost came in, but at the end of the day they didn't.

But we had to get this done. So it was Foothill, De Anza, and us. We brought in developers. We found two development groups that were interested in making a real bid and we selected one which we thought was more likely to bring it home. They basically paid our rent on the land. So it wasn't costing us real money. We'd invested some money upfront. Yes, we had made an investment to get this done and to get the legal work done and all of that, but they were basically paying our rent and the expenses of operating the University Associates, which was the LLC organization.

So that went on for a while. We wanted the development to then happen, the infrastructure to get built, etcetera, etcetera. But they weren't moving very fast because the business climate was not favorable. They were happy for a while to keep paying our rent and keep doling out money in small chunks to us, because they thought things would turn around at a certain point, and they wanted to be ready and in the driver's seat then. But not a lot was happening.

Eventually our contract with them ended and we decided to look around for another group. There was a hiatus there where we didn't pay rent. NASA got angry with us, because we chose not to pay them any rent. It didn't seem wise to throw good money after bad. We looked for a while at the Irvine Company as a potential developer, and they turned us down.

But then we found Google. Google was very interested because Google had just leased a whole chunk of NASA land to build a new headquarters. They were desperate for more

land. They needed to build housing. They wanted to build some housing on this land. And Pete was very supportive.

I forgot to mention that originally we were talking about a smaller chunk of land just to do some campus stuff, maybe some industrial things, and just develop that. Pete had come to me at one point and said, “No, there’s more land here. We want to give you this extra land, too, and put it in the deal, because we want you to develop housing there.” I had said fine. So we made an even bigger deal as a result of that.

So Google came in and we started discussions and negotiations with Google. Google started paying our rent. That was good. Google certainly had enough money to fully do the infrastructure, which had now grown to 200 million dollars. For them, that was small change. It really looked like it could happen. Now there were some optics issues, because Google had also leased this other place to build their headquarters building and then Google had also leased the airfield from NASA-Ames. There was an airfield there, which was very sensitive because, on the one hand, there were groups that wanted to maintain it as an airfield, so they wanted some airfield status. But none of the neighbors wanted large numbers of flights taking off and setting down. Google wanted it because the founders of Google had these big personal planes, and this was a great place to fly into. But now there was concern that NASA was going to appear to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Google. So that was a political consideration.

But we were tootling along and, I think, making progress. We got to a term sheet with Google. We actually got a term sheet. Of course, turning a term sheet into a contract is not easy, even though you’ve agreed to the basic terms of the contract. But we were in that process when NASA pulled the plug and pulled out. They had an option to end the lease because when we assigned the lease, we had agreed that we would develop it in a certain

time frame, and we hadn't done that. So they were perfectly within their legal rights to end the lease. And they did. The reason they did was because I think a new reality came over NASA. They realized that with global warming, the bay was rising and a large part of NASA-Ames was going to be underwater. So their long-term plan now is to move NASA Ames into the land that we had originally leased from them.

Reti: Wow! That's quite amazing.

Blumenthal: It's quite amazing. It left us in this awkward position where we no longer had the lease, and we actually owed NASA money. But when I said "we" owed NASA money, what it was was the LLC owed NASA money. And an LLC is a limited liability corporation, which means that the liability doesn't transfer to the owners of the corporation.

Reti: Very smart.

Blumenthal: Well, I hope so. People have questioned whether or not this will work. We basically folded the LLC since then. I do live in some fear that—NASA isn't going to come after us—but the federal government could. But on the other hand, I think we have a pretty good legal argument with being an LLC. On the other hand, I won't tell you that everyone agrees with me.

So that was the story of University Associates. It was a great idea and it could have worked. But it didn't work. We did burn some money in going down this route. Subsequent to that, the Office of the President decided maybe six months later that they would try to work out a mini deal for a tiny fraction of that land with NASA. NASA was interested; UCOP was interested. I went up and I talked to their vice president, the new senior vice president about this to try to download everything I knew. I was trying to be helpful. I was a little resentful. But helpful. She took it all in and they had some conversations with NASA. But

I don't think it went well because by that time, Pete had left. The new director, who I have a good relationship with, Eugene Tu,³³⁰ asked me on several occasions, "What's happening with UCOP?" And of course I didn't know. To me, nothing was happening with UCOP. I know that some of the campuses, like Irvine, were adamantly opposed to doing this plan with UCOP. Then when the audit hit, and all the crap that came out of the audit, it was clear UCOP could do nothing.

Pete stayed for more than ten years as director, which is an amazing duration. I will tell you that when Obama was elected president, I went to Anna Eshoo³³¹ and encouraged her to support Pete because I feared that his politics might get him ousted. But I felt that he had been a good friend to the campus, and that he was really a good leader for NASA-Ames. She felt that way very strongly as well, so in fact she did help preserve his job. If you know anything about Anna Eshoo, she is nobody's fool. She knew what she was doing.

Obama appointed a new director of NASA, a former astronaut, Charles Boldin.³³² Pete and he really disliked each other. I'm not sure I know all of the reasons. I'm not even sure I know any of the reasons. I just know it was true and Pete made no bones about it. In a way, I was surprised Pete lasted as long as he did because even if we'd covered the political aspect, I think that this personal dysfunctional relationship between Pete and the director of NASA would have done him in. But he stuck around for a long time still. So he really did survive. His wife lives in Arizona and he lives here. They are married, and they do have a functional marriage. (Reti laughs) He said Arizona's his home. He said he's never been able to stay in one job long enough to make it justifiable to move his wife. I don't think he had any expectations he'd stay for ten years.

When Pete stepped down, he then became the president of the Breakthrough Foundation. Pete, when he was director of NASA-Ames, allowed the Breakthrough Foundation to have

their big award dinners inside the big hangar at NASA-Ames. So he has a really good relationship with the Breakthrough founders, in particular, Uri Milner, who's the main donor to the Breakthrough Foundation. So Pete is doing that now, and periodically I talk with him. I talked with him not too long ago to see if we could get some funding for one of our faculty. He's still going strong.

So eventually our UARC contract came to an end and we had to re-compete. NASA decided to do the competition as a different kind of a contract, a five-year contract. We were certainly interested in submitting. We knew there would be other groups submitting as well, but we decided to submit something that was much more scientific, or had an adjunct to it that would involve a much greater degree of real scientific collaboration between NASA and the campus.

So we put together a great proposal. It was a major effort, and it had a somewhat innovative approach as well because we attached to it an institute that we would establish at NASA, that would be a joint institute that really could do some interesting things. I think they were very interested in that.

The other thing we did is we decided to bring in another partner. We brought in UC San Diego. San Diego was very interested in doing something up here in Silicon Valley. And to be really honest with you, the other major advantage of San Diego was that I trusted them. I trust their chancellor and I trust the campus. I didn't trust the people at Berkeley, who were also interested. We gave them a very minor role in this partnership. I felt like Berkeley was going to take over, but San Diego seemed as though they were straightforward. And we did want to be the leaders here.

At the end of the day, we did not get the contract. We lost it. It turned out that the NASA official who was in charge of awarding the contract was close friends with the leader of

the collaboration that won. I'm not saying there was anything illegitimate that happened, but I was very unhappy. And there were certain things that troubled me deeply about it. For example, the group that won had the collaboration of some CSU campuses and that was graded more highly in terms of what they were bringing to the table, in terms of research acumen, than the UC campuses we were working with. I thought that was bizarre, to say the least, and unfair, and unreasonable. So actually, at the end of their contract award, when we didn't get the contract—and it was close, because they kept asking for more information—I seriously considered filing a formal appeal, and ultimately decided not to because the appeals process at NASA is long, difficult, and very unlikely to lead to positive results.

Reti: Right. In terms of long-term relationships.

Blumenthal: There was the long-term relationship thing, but even if you win the appeal, that doesn't win you the contract. It's a step along the way. It just seemed long, protracted. We needed to move on. So we ended UARC. UARC is no more. It was actually a dip downward in the campus' research budget as a result. It was a lost opportunity, but I firmly believe that the team that put together the proposal did an outstanding job. They put together a winning proposal. That may sound like bitter grapes, and of course I didn't read both proposals, so I can't tell you. But I remain skeptical that the other proposal truly was better. But, nevertheless, it is what it is, and decisions get made. But the net result of that is that at this point, we have very little left of what we were officially doing with NASA, despite a very close and very active relationship with them for the longest time. It's too bad.

I have a good relationship with the new director, Eugene Tu, but he's not Pete Worden. When I talk to him, it's clear getting something done is not as simple as getting him to

say, “I want to get this done,” and it will be done. He told me he was shocked at the award. He didn’t make the award. He wasn’t the awarding official, but he was genuinely shocked. And I believe him. He even approached me afterwards about starting these centers that we had talked about as a part of the award. We hadn’t gotten the award, but he was quite anxious to start these centers as long as we would pay for a good chunk of them. Frankly, that isn’t how I would want to make an investment. So right now, we don’t have a strong relationship. I think that the recent hire of Natalie Batalha in astronomy may change that a little bit. Natalie is a former student who got her PhD here. She was the head of the Kepler project at NASA and now she’s our faculty member. So I think that there may be more relationships being built through her than might otherwise be the case.

Reti: Mm hmm. So there might be another unfolding.

Blumenthal: But I don’t anticipate a huge upsurge in NASA’s relationship with the campus. Maybe when the five-year contract is up in another couple of years, the campus will bid. I don’t know. That will be a decision that whoever’s in charge here will have to make. But basically, NASA is no longer an active participant.

There’s one final thing about NASA that I hadn’t talked about. Nothing ever came of it, but it was really interesting. About five years ago, Pete came to me somewhat nervously and wanted to explore the possibility that if it came to pass that things went really bad for NASA-Ames, that UCSC would consider running the NASA-Ames center. He was pleasantly surprised to discover that I knew a lot about the process because I’d been heavily involved in the national lab issue, and UC had run the national labs for many years. So I knew a lot about the process and the potential for it. So I was very positive, and I said, “I’m there.” I said, “I will be enthusiastically supporting this.” It was interesting because I also talked to his assistant director and their associate director, and they were

equally surprised at my enthusiasm because they were going to come to me and try to persuade me that this is something worth doing.

So we had those discussions. Nothing ever came of it. I think things didn't go downhill for NASA-Ames nearly as badly as they had feared, although they are always in danger, and they recently lost earth sciences, so that pillar of their program that I had talked about is no longer officially theirs anymore. NASA-Ames has a lot of great things they're doing, and based on science, they probably should be doing well. But NASA is a strange organization.

Serving on the Boards of Silicon Valley Organizations

So that is NASA-Ames. The other thing I wanted to talk about in Silicon Valley was Silicon Valley organizations. I've been involved in a number of Silicon Valley groups. I'll mention four of them. One of the first ones to contact us when I became chancellor was Joint Ventures Silicon Valley. It's a group of chief executives of Silicon Valley companies that gets together to work on various projects, usually a few projects at a time. It doesn't include most of the Silicon Valley companies, but it tries to be very active. They had reached out to Denise when she was chancellor and she had hosted a meeting of Joint Ventures at University House. They had also offered her a special deal for membership, so she got UCSC membership for half price. But it's interesting that Joint Ventures, for all of the good things that it does, doesn't recognize Santa Cruz County as a part of their domain, unlike the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, which does. So for example, the City of Santa Cruz is very upset with them that they won't be officially recognized.

Joint Ventures has done one or two things really well, the main thing being their annual economic performance indicators for Silicon Valley. They do this annual report on Silicon Valley, which I think is highly influential and highly important. And they do it very well.

Most of the other things that they've worked on, I think, haven't been really impactful in the way that I might have hoped. I've been very limited in my involvement. I've gone to a couple of their board meetings over the years, perhaps just a couple. I did get involved heavily when they were recruiting someone to be their new person in charge of the annual report on Silicon Valley. I was a part of that search committee and did the interviews. So I've had a little bit of activity with them over the years, but not a lot, certainly not as much as SVLG. So I wish them well, but I think that they need to have more accomplishments to their credit.

SVLG, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, is a different story entirely. I've been heavily involved with them since the beginning. That's a group that does involve virtually all the major companies in Silicon Valley. The chief executives do get involved in working with the group. After a year, maybe when I became permanent chancellor, I was elected to their board of directors. I'll have been on their board of directors until June, when I will step off the board of directors because only CEOs of Silicon Valley companies can be on the board and I will no longer be such. But I will try to encourage them to nominate the next chancellor to replace me.

Reti: Are the other universities in the area also represented?

Blumenthal: All of the other universities are represented. In terms of board membership, I think Father Engh³³³ is on the board, and I think Mary Papazian³³⁴ at San Jose State, is now on the board. I strongly advocated for them.

I think one of the reasons SVLG is so successful is because of Carl Guardino,³³⁵ who's the president of SVLG. He's been really good, and he's been there ever since I had come. They have this long history. They were started by David Packard,³³⁶ way back when. They're committed to making a difference and accomplishing things. And they do. Virtually every

bond measure in Silicon Valley that's occurred over the last certainly ten years has been a Silicon Valley Leadership Group bond measure where they've done fundraising; they've done the polling. The political acumen that they bring to that is really impressive.

I chaired the higher education group within SVLG for a few years until that disappeared in a reorganization. It was reorganized, the group. When Ken Kannappan³³⁷ was still the president of Plantronics, he and I got together and we persuaded the board to agree that they would get involved in the Santa Cruz transportation measure a few years ago. We were very careful. We encouraged them not to be the leader, but rather to get involved because Santa Cruz would have objected violently to having somebody from outside come in and lead the effort. On the other hand, SVLG has never lost a bond measure vote. Never. They know what they're doing. They know how to poll. They know how to invest just enough to make it work. So they did get involved in the Santa Cruz transportation measure, which ultimately did pass.

I think they've been a great organization. In fact, Mary Papazian and I last year wrote a joint piece for them in their *Game Changers* publication about what a game changer it would be if we had a bond measure in California for UC and CSU. I've over the years gotten many great contacts for the campus from my membership in SVLG.

Reti: So that piece that you co-wrote with her, that was for a newspaper? Or a report?

Blumenthal: No, it was for a publication that SVLG puts out called *Game Changers*.

So at the end of the day, I haven't said a whole lot about SVLG, but they've been heavily involved in issues of interest to us, from transportation in Silicon Valley to climate change in Silicon Valley. They've been interested in Santa Cruz. I've tried with Ken, for example, to recruit more businesses in Santa Cruz to be members of SVLG. They have no hesitancy including Santa Cruz within their purview, unlike Joint Ventures. So, they continue to be

a great partner for the campus. I've hosted a number of board meetings at our new Silicon Valley campus because I want people to be aware of it. I've used that as an opportunity to advertise, for example, our Kraw lectures in Silicon Valley. But more than that, I think just the contacts and being a part of the Silicon Valley crowd have been a real advantage to us as we move forward. I really do encourage the next chancellor to be as heavily involved in SVLG as I am. It's one of the organizations I've most appreciated.

Another group that I've been involved in was called SILVHER, Silicon Valley Higher Education Roundtable.³³⁸ It basically was a collection of colleges and other educational institutions in Silicon Valley devoted to first generation and underserved populations and student success. Martha Kanter was the head of it when I first came in. It did some interesting things. It did some good things. Some things I was less supportive of than others. For example, one of the programs they had which I wasn't all that supportive of was having kindergarten graduations, where they would invite college presidents to preside over kindergarten graduations. The idea was to set up an expectation of college from a very young age. I felt as though that was a little bit of a stretch in terms of effectiveness and effective use of time. But people really enjoyed doing it. When Martha left, I inherited the chair of that group, and I ended that program. It was probably not good to have made me the head of it. A more natural person would have been the president of San Jose State. But that was, for a time, a bit of a revolving door. I tried very hard to initiate some new programs in Silicon Valley that did outreach to underserved high schools and encouraged the college-going population, particularly first generation populations.

Ultimately, SILVHER failed. It failed for a couple of reasons, the most important of which was the great recession, because when the great recession happened I couldn't get the various organizations to pay their dues, and so we were left without operating money. The

dues weren't that excessive, but in the great recession, everyone looked at their organizations.

The other thing was, we had somebody who was really good who served as our liaison. She ran the educational partnership center in the early days. She was exceptionally good, really committed. But when we hired Felicia as the vice chancellor of student affairs, Felicia McGinty,³³⁹ Felicia had some issues with some of the people who worked for her, one of whom was Carol and Carol ultimately resigned, which was a real loss. Felicia herself took an interest in SILVHER, but by then, it was too little, too late. But I think the main factor was the great recession. That ended SILVHER and we never tried to restart it, *per se*.

Working on the California Master Plan for Higher Education

Another group that I've been involved with, I organized, is a Master Plan group. The Master Plan came out in 1960. Every few years they would do a revision of the Master Plan. It wasn't a real revision. The Legislature would write some report and they would call it the whatever-revision of the Master Plan. I don't know that any of them have been particularly effective up until now. Two times ago, when they were doing a revision, I was on the Academic Council. I may have mentioned this already, but I was involved in writing the Academic Council input into the revision. And we submitted it. They didn't take account of any of the written input. They completely changed the first draft of the Master Plan revision and didn't allow subsequent changes. So that was two times ago.

The previous time they did the Master Plan, Ira Ruskin,³⁴⁰ who is the assemblyman from San Mateo, co-chaired the group with another legislator, Anthony Portentino,³⁴¹ from San Bernardino. I had become quite close to Ira Ruskin. I'd met him. We liked each other. So, we started meeting periodically for breakfast on a Sunday in Silicon Valley. Ira and I

became quite close. When it was clear he was going to be the co-chair of the Master Plan group, he invited me to an event in Pasadena, at the co-chair's district. They wrote a report. They acknowledged that they didn't have enough time to do anything serious. That was more or less a status report on the Master Plan, more than a vision for the future.

Well, two years ago a new state assemblyman, Marc Berman³⁴² had just been elected to office, I think representing Ira's old district in San Mateo. He was appointed to be the head of the new Master Plan Joint Committee. Marc is somebody I really like. I had taken the initiative—if I could just do a diversion for a moment—one of the things I've been involved in doing, and I thought it was a great initiative a few years ago, is that whenever people are running for office in an area that's of interest to UCSC, I've tried to put together a group of presidents—community college, CSU or whatever—to meet with the candidates for office of both parties after the nomination. We would meet with each of them to try to give them briefing on the key issues in higher education that face their district. I've done that any number of times with legislators and they've usually worked very, very well. Most legislators agree to meet, sometimes not, but most of the times they do. It's usually a very helpful way of providing input. I've always been very clear with them that we're not going to endorse any candidate. We're not going to give money to any candidate; we're not going to do anything like that. This is non-political in the sense that this is an educational thing, and that we were planning to meet with their opponent as well. They all understood that. I was trying to be very, very upfront about it so that people understood.

In the case of Marc, it turned out that his opponent had no interest in having a meeting. When the meeting came with him, I was the only president that I could get to the meeting. (laughter) So I had coffee with Marc. We hit it off. I really liked him, and I think it was vice versa. We formed a really good relationship. So when he became the person in charge of the Master Plan, I put together a group, which I sometimes called the Gang of Four,

which is the president of Foothill-De Anza District, Judy Miner³⁴³; plus the president of San Jose State, Mary Papazian; plus the president of Santa Clara University, Father Engh; and me. Each represents a different segment of higher education in California.

I remember, the first meeting—it's kind of funny because I know the Master Plan so much better than most people. And so (laughs) I held forth for like forty-five minutes on all the major issues facing the Master Plan, and kind of blew Marc Berman away. He said, "I want this in writing." (laughter) So I put it in writing for him. I wanted the whole group to approve it, which they did. So we set forth all of the big issues that he should look at. I think a couple of members of the group went to a couple of public hearings that he organized. But the public hearings, I thought, weren't going to be all that useful the way they did them. It was very legislatively driven. I was more interested in the issues.

Since then, we've been working through, as a group, some of the tough issues that the Master Plan faces and proposing some approaches to him. This is ongoing. Michael Engh is retiring and he's moving to Southern California, so he will disappear. We'll have to figure out his replacement. But I'm going to keep doing this; I was asked by the others to keep doing it. Theoretically you could argue I should drop out, but I'm going to do it. I don't have to be a chancellor to do this. It's informal. It's all informal.

Reti: Could you summarize a few of these tough issues that the Master Plan is facing at this moment in history?

Blumenthal: One very specific issue that we've had a lot of discussion on, because it's more urgent, is child of CPEC, the California Post-Secondary Education Commission. CPEC didn't start immediately with the Master Plan. It started some years later. It was meant to be an oversight body for the success of the Master Plan. It existed for quite a while, until about five years ago, when Jerry Brown basically eliminated it. CPEC was an

organization that had some real potential advantages in that it involved oversight over the Master Plan and the relationships among the various segments of higher education. I think it did many good things. Every four or five years it did an analysis of admissions to UC and CSU to see if we were meeting our Master Plan obligation of, in our case taking from the top 12 and a half percent. And in fact, UC every few years would modify our eligibility criteria based upon that analysis, so that we would stay at 12 and a half percent, although CSU didn't necessarily do so themselves. They're at 33 percent.

CPEC also came up with guidelines for how much space should be available on campuses for academic programming that the state should fund. So there was a formula.

Reti: Literally, how much physical space?

Blumenthal: Yeah. So for example, I think I probably mentioned that when I was senate chair here, we were at 69 percent of our CPEC space allocation.

Reti: Yes, you did mention that.

Blumenthal: And my point about CPEC is that it set a standard. It wasn't just UC saying, "We need more space," or CSU saying, "We need more space." It was an objective, independent body coming up with a formula that we could use as a basis for discussing whether or not we had space needs. So I think in that way, it was a very useful thing. It was useful in that it was CPEC that came up with a formula for how UC could compare faculty salaries with our comparison institutions. So they came up with a comparison eight institutions, four public and four private. And they came up with an exact methodology of how you compare our salaries to their salaries. I don't really know that formula. I remember when I was senate chair, I asked somebody at the Office of the President if they'd mind taking a few minutes and explain it to me. And basically, his response was, "You don't want to know. (laughter) It's a compromise, and therefore it

isn't logical." But still, it was endorsed by an independent agency, and so it had some validity to it. So in those ways, CPEC was very good.

On the other hand, CPEC was very badly run and managed. They did a lot of stupid things. It was very political in some ways. And for a while, its leader was the leader of CPEC only because he was married to some very powerful person in Sacramento and it was impossible to make a change. So ultimately Brown just got rid of CPEC.

For the last two years, there have been bills in the legislature to resurrect CPEC in a somewhat different form. I'm very supportive of the resurrection; I'm not supportive of the form that it was going to take. So one of the issues we've been working on as a group is how should this work? What might we do? How should son of CPEC, or daughter of CPEC, take form? We came up with some proposals that I think make sense. So that's one set of issues.

Another set of issues more broadly is that the Master Plan was conceived in a time when there was a commitment by the state of California to fund 100 percent of higher education. The original Master Plan said that UC and CSU and community colleges should charge no tuition. Whatever happened to that? Incidentally, the Master Plan also called for free parking for faculty. (laughs) That's always a good line when I give a talk. (laughter) The Master Plan was just conceived at a different time, when there were different realities. Some of those realities have changed. We really should think about what the implications of those changed realities are. I would argue that, rather than talking about tuition, we should talk about quality, and we should have measures of quality that we would insist upon for UC, CSU, and the community colleges. So that's the second issue.

The third issue is enrollment growth and the funding for enrollment growth. The Master Plan anticipated enrollment growth of all three segments. But we can't accommodate any

old enrollment growth. What should be our understanding of how we accommodate it, both in terms of classroom space availability and how do we accommodate it in terms of budget?

Another major issue for the Master Plan is mission creep. To what extent is there mission creep and do we worry about it? Ten years ago, there was this huge fight between UC and CSU about the doctorate of education degree, the EdD. Then we fought about professional program in audiology and put in these joint programs. But then we chose not to fight about the doctoral degree in physical therapy because no way does UCSC want to offer a physical therapy doctorate. We need clear guidelines on what should be and shouldn't be allowed. I think nobody believes that CSU should offer medical education, MD degrees. And I think nobody would argue that CSU should offer law degrees. But I certainly think professional doctoral programs, for example, doctorates in nursing might be appropriate at CSU. We need to better define those, and we also need to better define the boundaries between the community colleges and the CSUs.

A few years ago, there was a bill that allowed, on a temporary basis, some community colleges to offer a bachelor's degree. I supported the notion of doing this on the grounds that the bachelor's degrees that they wanted to offer were degrees that were not going to get offered at CSU or UC, so there was definitely a need there. My concern there was that giving this approval on an interim basis, I thought was a big mistake. I don't know how you set up a major without permanent faculty and how do you hire permanent faculty if you don't know if you can continue doing this? So it seemed to me this was one of those things where you either jump in or you don't. You don't try to do it on an interim basis. So I had a conversation with the sponsor of the bill, a senator from San Diego, who's a good guy. He's the one who occupied the seat that's currently occupied by Toni Atkins, the Speaker Pro Tempore. I pointed out my concerns about his bill and I persuaded him

that I was right. Then his reaction was, “You’ve persuaded me that you’re right. But politics is the art of the possible, and I can’t get your right idea through the legislature right now. But I can get mine through.”

I think that community colleges will continue to offer bachelor’s degrees. I think it actually is a good thing for the state. But we need to find a way to clearly define what the boundary is. What is it that they should be able to offer? And maybe that’s through a CPEC type organization, or maybe it’s some other means. But we really should provide clarity about what’s appropriate and what isn’t.

Reti: This model that California has of having community colleges, a CSU, and a UC—is that something that other states have?

Blumenthal: It has been emulated elsewhere. A number of states adopted something similar. Some have adopted very different models. In some states, the community colleges, the CSUs, and their equivalent of UC are all in one system, so that they have a system with very different types of universities in them. But other states have adopted some things that are similar. I may have mentioned that really early on in my chancellorship, I met with some Indian leaders who were tasked with coming up with a new higher education Master Plan for India. They wanted to consult with me about the Master Plan for California and how adaptable it would be for India. And so, I suggested to them—and actually they adopted my suggestion—of using the Master Plan for California but with one major revision, namely, dividing the community colleges into two groups, making two groups of community colleges—one group that’s solely concerned with transfer, and the other group that’s solely concerned with vocational education and adult education, all the other ancillary stuff. So you could keep the ones that are doing transfer separate, and make them focus entirely on the transfer mission. They adopted

what I suggested. They wrote this big long report to the president of India and he liked it. But like much of what happens in India, many great ideas live in graveyards.

Reti: Do you anticipate California trying to completely rewrite that Master Plan at any point soon?

Blumenthal: It could happen that there's a complete rewriting, but I think it would be a disaster. I think there was a lot to be said for the visionary work that Clark Kerr did back in 1960. But the original Master Plan was more than just a visionary document. It was also a pragmatic political compromise. If we were to rewrite the Master Plan, I worry that the politicians who each have their own political agenda would get involved, and we would end up with something that was unworkable, or certainly wouldn't preserve the excellence of higher education in California.

Reti: Okay. Well, I think that's a good place to stop for today.

SurveyGate

Reti: Okay. So today is April 11, 2019. This is Irene Reti, and I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our thirtieth session of the oral history that we are doing together. Today we're going to be talking about what George calls SurveyGate.

Blumenthal: Yes. I'm not actually the one who came up with the title of SurveyGate. I think that was the chair of the systemwide senate, Jim Chalfont at the time. From Davis.

So let me just make a comment about audits and auditors. Most auditors that I've met in my life, whether they be university auditors, or whether they be government auditors, or whether they be auditors who work in private companies, have been people above reproach, absolutely above reproach. I found Gerri Gail, our auditor, to be just really smart. I actually popped in to see her several times. I remember one issue was brought to

me by the chair of the senate in Santa Barbara, who was having trouble getting his hands on an audit that had been done there about the EVC and the chancellor, and a scandal that had happened at Santa Barbara. He really wanted to see that audit. Of course, I didn't know the answer to his question about how to get the audit. But I went and talked to Gerri and Gerri was very, very helpful. She knew how audits worked and how the audit committee worked. She knew what the buttons were to press. So I went back to him. I think I called him up and I said, "Look, I have some information for you," and I explained to him what buttons to push. He got that audit within three days, the audit report. So Gerri was very, very helpful. My main point is that auditors are generally quite good people.

Another person I would call out is Kurt Sjoberg,³⁴⁴ who I got to know later, the Sjoberg report. He was the state auditor for a number of years before he left that to go into private practice, and I think he's a very good guy. I would trust him completely with something.

Over the years, as the state has done audits of UC, some of those audits have uncovered uncomfortable things for UC. But in some cases, that might have been appropriate to uncover them. So for example—and I don't know if Sjoberg was the auditor then, I wasn't sophisticated enough to know the names of people—but back around 2000 or 2001, the state did an audit of classes at UC and discovered a very substantial number of classes contained only one or two students. That became a big headline and there was lots of bad publicity for UC. Some of that was completely justified. There are courses that we do need to offer for majors, for example, and not well-populated majors. But a lot of those were faculty having laboratory meetings with their lab students, which they designated as courses. So there was some real justification for some of that, maybe not all of that.

Reti: This is at the undergraduate level, or both?

Blumenthal: I think that this was a total audit of all classes.

Reti: Okay. So some of those would be graduate courses.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Some of them were graduate courses. It caused a lot of upset. Dick Atkinson was then the president of the university and two things happened. One was Dick Atkinson proposed, and the campuses all adopted, a form of freshman seminar course, a two-unit course that freshmen could take, that would introduce them to the university, to be taught by ladder-rank faculty, in other words, professors. That went on for a number of years after that particular audit. And a second thing happened—

Reti: Wait, George, I'm not following why calling out UC for having courses with only two students, why the remedy for that would be a freshman course with ladder-rank faculty.

Blumenthal: Fair question. The reason is that if we got only classes with one or two students taught by professors, and large lectures taught by lecturers, or non-ladder rank faculty, that shows that the faculty at UC aren't teaching. It may not be true, but I'm telling you what the perception is. By instituting freshman seminars taught by faculty, we were bringing home the point that our ladder faculty are indeed engaging the students.

Reti: Okay, great. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So that was one thing. The second thing was they formed a task force, which I unfortunately found myself on, which was charged with coming up with a scheme to classify courses so that in the cases of classes that might only have two students in it, there might be justification for it. So we were supposed to come up with a classification system that showed that this was intrinsically justified. So we worked on that. I was on that group as the vice chair of the systemwide senate. We came up with a scheme and it was reviewed and nominally adopted. I'm not sure how much it was actually used over

the years, but it gave everyone a feeling of security that we had some schema into which we could put all of our courses and justify what we were doing. The university has since abandoned that schema. It was somewhat kludgy in its character.

So that's a little bit, by way of background. I'm trying to assert that I'm not biased against auditors or against audits. I think sometimes, even if they're uncomfortable, they can be useful. Having said that, I've now seen a number of audits by Elaine Howle,³⁴⁵ who is the current state auditor. And all I can say is she is a piece of work. I've seen some of the most political audits imaginable from her office. I've seen some really, I believe, intellectually dishonest audits from her office, probably motivated by politics.

An example of that from a few years ago was the audit of non-resident students at UC. It was a major state audit. They sent, apparently, all these young, avid employees of the auditor's office to UC. It took a long time to educate them about what was going on. And then they wrote a report, which was false in a number of ways, so the university submitted a very detailed response to correct the errors. They barely corrected any of them. They issued this report about how non-resident students were taking up the spaces that could go to Californians and really gave short shrift to the argument on the other side, which I actually believe is a true argument. We are talking about places like Berkeley and UCLA. This audit really had almost no effect on Santa Cruz. The argument on the other side was that without the income that came from non-resident tuition, UCLA or Berkeley could not have educated the number of California students they had. Roughly speaking, one non-resident pays for two California residents. But that wasn't acknowledged as a fact; it was acknowledged as a UC argument in the audit report.

I felt that the audit report was very un-objective. It got a lot of headlines. It seemed as though Elaine Howle was going for headlines. Maybe the people in the legislature who

had called for the audit wanted those headlines and she was accommodating them, I don't know. But in any event, I felt it was intellectually dishonest. I was also struck by how uninformed most of the workforce was in the auditor's office. They were all young, underpaid auditors, which is probably the only kind of people they could get at the salaries they were offering.

But I also have to say I was struck by the intellectual dishonesty. I come from a set of beliefs that you have to be honest. You have to go where the data takes you. This just felt like political theater. So with that context in mind, as issues had continued to arise from the so-called committee of two, namely Janet Napolitano and Jerry Brown, a couple of the state legislators led by Sam [Ting], really took a negative view of UC, and I think Jerry Brown also had a very skeptical view of UC, not to mention the rest of higher education. I'm sure that in discussions with the campuses, legislators were hearing criticism of UCOP, particularly because the funding streams methodology meant that UCOP was funded by campus assessments. Ultimately, there was a call for a state audit of the UC Office of the President.

I'm sure that part of the motivation for the audit was that [as I mentioned earlier in this oral history] a few years ago, when the university instituted funding streams, part of funding streams, was that all resources that we got from the state and from tuition would go out to the campuses and then basically the campuses would themselves fund the Office of the President through a tax, or an assessment model, a tax that must be paid. Well, initially the tax was a flat tax on everything, on all expenditures. Later, because of complaints from the medical enterprise, they changed the tax a little bit. But basically, it was a tax on all expenditures at different rates depending on the type of expenditure, and campuses could pay that tax using money of any color that they wanted to. Some campuses paid the tax using medical dollars. Some campuses paid the tax using state

dollars. Some paid it using tuitions. Some paid it using overhead dollars from research. The campuses were given the freedom to do what they wished. and the people who wear green eyeshades up at the Office of the President were tasked with how to keep it all legal.

A lot of people objected to the tax model. In fact, they never used the word “tax.” They always used “assessment” or some other word. I call it a tax because it is a tax. I don’t see tax as a bad word. I could just as well use “assessment” rather than “tax.” But I don’t see it as a bad word. But because many people did call it a tax, somehow it came to have a negative connotation. Certainly, one of the issues that some campuses had was the size of the tax on the grounds that once we get money in our hot little hands, we hate to return it to the Office of the President.

And so it, quite reasonably, led to greater scrutiny of the programs at the Office of the President in terms of what would be needed, was really needed, and what isn’t really needed. There was a lot of criticism that had developed of some of the programs at the Office of the President, in particular of Janet’s initiatives. Janet had a pile of initiatives. She had like at that point maybe twenty initiatives. Maybe more. I never could keep them straight without a scorecard. It seemed as though every time I turned around, there was a new initiative. But none of those initiatives were vetted with the chancellors. None were vetted with the senate. She just had all these initiatives. Most of them were five million dollar initiatives. A few were bigger. She would just announce them periodically. In a way, this was ironic because number one, many of her initiatives, though extremely well-motivated and for good causes, were completely underfunded to achieve what they wanted to achieve. Number two, it kind of amused me, because when Mark Yudof was president, I actually kept pushing Mark to think about a couple of initiatives that he might want to do. Mark had no initiatives. And I thought, why not? I kept saying, “Why not put your own stamp on your presidency? If something is close to your heart, everyone

understands, you're the president. You should be able to do it." And he never did. So it was kind of the other extreme when Janet came into town. I think that's a politician's approach, to have initiatives. You threw a bunch of initiatives against the wall; you see what sticks and what you can take credit for, and you forget about the others.

But those initiatives did not go over well with the campuses or the chancellors. Even I, who am generally supportive of UCOP—I'm much more supportive of a bigger UCOP than a smaller UCOP, and certainly am probably the most extreme among the chancellors in that regard—even I thought the number of initiatives was kind of silly, even though I thought several of them were quite important.

Reti: Why do you think there should be a bigger UCOP or a smaller UCOP?

Blumenthal: Because I think that UCOP does important services for the campuses. Some of those services are obvious and everyone would agree with. For example, UCOP has the Office of General Counsel. Yes, we do have our campus lawyers. But at Santa Cruz, over most of my chancellorship, we've had two lawyers. But if you think about it, one or two or even three lawyers doesn't encompass the kind of expertise that you need, for example, for CEQA. CEQA's highly specialized. When we need CEQA help, we really need CEQA help, so having the experience and the knowledge base up there makes a lot of sense. That's just one example out of many. Healthcare—why would we have a healthcare attorney on campus when, in fact, that's something that affects the whole system. I think everyone agrees that it's desirable to have that office up there. That's an example of something that no one really seriously questions. There are a number of other programs that no one seriously questions.

But then there's a bunch of stuff that falls into a questionable area. In fact, I've had this conversation several times with Gene Block from UCLA. He will support OGC, no

question. But he will point out, quite correctly, that a lot of the work that's done by Finance at the Office of the President, or by the people in charge of construction, they already do on their campus. UCLA has great finance people. They have people who work on construction. They don't need the Office of the President to go through that stuff. They don't need them to prepare it for the regents. They don't need them to prepare it for going out to bid, or any of that other stuff. They've got the workforce on the UCLA campus that can get it done, and get it done efficiently. They resent the extra step that they have to go through to get items approved at the Office of the President.

I can understand that. I have two responses, though. One is to Gene specifically, I think if an item goes through the regents, it really has to be approved by the president, and she deserves, as a matter of principle, an independent look at all material that goes through the regents. And number two, for smaller campuses like Santa Cruz, there is no way we can provide the kind of services on campus that a big campus like UCLA can. We can't prepare the kind of documents that they can prepare. We can't do all of the work that they can do, both in terms of finance and in terms of construction. If we tried to do that, it would be very inefficient because we would have work that would perhaps keep one person working half-time on these issues for years, and then suddenly we would need three people for six months. And then we'd go back to the need for a half-time person. It would be crazy for us to do this on our own. The same applies to the other smaller campuses. So I would argue that those areas are really necessary at UCOP.

Gene would disagree. I think he's got a legitimate argument. He and I even talked about the possibility that a place like UCLA could supply that service for Santa Cruz. But the downside of such a plan is that I think as a chancellor of Santa Cruz, I would want to have the same priority that the chancellor at UCLA gets. We'd have to work out a very careful deal to make sure that was guaranteed.

Reti: Yeah, that's pretty tricky.

Blumenthal: It is tricky. So anyway, that's a long explanation to say why I'm generally more supportive of UCOP than most of the other chancellors, or most of the other campuses. I think they do valuable things. I do think there are things there that maybe we could cut back, but I also think there are things there that we could expand, so from my perspective, they're pretty close to being right-sized. But I recognize that others would disagree.

Okay. So we've talked about why there would be an audit, and why there was some dissatisfaction on the campuses. The audit really fell into two categories: a financial audit and an audit of attitudes toward the Office of the President. It's the attitudinal audit that led to what we call SurveyGate. The financial audit was a separate piece of the audit. Let me talk about the financial audit first, because we can just get it out of the way, but the financial audit came down at the same time. These were at the same time, so it wasn't as easily separated as I'm suggesting. So basically, the financial audit uncovered what was characterized as a hidden slush fund at the Office of the President of many tens of millions of dollars; I forget the exact number they used, although we can certainly look it up. It was characterized as funds that were not approved by the regents, that were kind of a slush fund used for random things, or squirreled away for a rainy day. But as we talked about squirreling away, even the auditor agreed that it made sense for the Office of the President to squirrel away some reserve for bad times going forward. Even the auditor agreed to that. And the auditor was right, that for reasons that I'm not sure I even understand today, the regents didn't approve certain portions of the budget of the UC Office of the President. So it had not gone to the regents for approval, except maybe sort of broad band approval of a big chunk of money to the Office of the President to do good stuff.

The regents were criticized for not having sufficient oversight of the budget of the Office of the President. We can discuss whether or not that's appropriate or not. I'm of mixed mind. I think, given the sensitivities, the regents should have been more oversightful than they were. On the other hand, I'm not a big believer in micromanagement, either. I'm a much bigger believer in post audits, which I think the regents can do.

On the other hand, I really objected to the characterization of this as the hidden fund, or slush fund, or things like that because if you actually look at what those programs paid for, they paid for very important programs for the UC system, for example, the Presidential Postdoctoral Program, which allows us to hire postdocs who work on issues that will advance underrepresented people in the UC system. And some of those ["hidden"] funds went toward student success programs, or initiatives toward student success. They were perfectly legitimate things. This was not weird, arcane slush funds. This didn't pay for big parties. This paid for very legitimate things for the university. What set them apart was that they weren't in a part of the budget that had explicit regental approval down at the detailed level. Anyway, that got a lot of publicity, with of course the nuance that something fishy was going on, when in fact nothing fishy was going on.

But it had profound implications down the line, which I'll talk about later. But basically the auditor insisted that, as a result, the Office of the President had to go through, I forget the number, forty different recommendations on the future of budgeting at the Office of the President, and was given a finite amount of time to institute changes, some of which the regents had to do. They have devoted a lot of time and attention to putting in place those recommendations. Janet found herself in the position where she simply had to accept all of the recommendations. Most of the recommendations were actually good. Some were already being done. Some weren't. Most of them were good. A few of them were silly. And in fact, interestingly enough, the regents hired Kurt Sjoberg, the former

auditor, the one who I spoke highly of, to actually do his own assessment of the progress that the UC is making in terms of putting in place those recommendations. He has been much more positive about the progress made than has Elaine Howle, who has periodically complained that UC is lagging behind in instituting those recommendations. It's a bloody mess and the amount of money that's been burned to do this stuff, which, I think, has limited value, is just amazing. But that's politics. And frankly, that's what it is: politics.

I was concerned from the beginning about the lack of preparation for the audit. It was discussed very briefly at chancellor's meetings. The auditors were going to the campuses and surveying people, sending them surveys to fill out about their attitudes toward the Office of the President.

Reti: So now we're onto the other part of the audit.

Blumenthal: Now we're on to the other part. And Janet did say at one meeting, I saw in my notes, that the chancellors do have the authority to provide campus responses for those surveys. I didn't pay much attention at the time, I have to admit, because I thought that was kind of a silly comment. Little did I know. But there wasn't really a serious discussion of it. I think it is noteworthy that the surveys that were sent out did not go to either the chancellors or the EVCs. No, I can't swear to the EVCs. Certainly, I got no survey from the auditor. So they never surveyed me.

Reti: Who were they surveying?

Blumenthal: They were surveying some vice chancellors, the director of Staff Human Resources, people two to three levels down the food chain from me. They just surveyed them directly. Their auditors didn't need to go directly through me.

I knew the survey was happening. I assumed bad things would come out of the survey. And my reaction was, and still is, that if all we had done was nothing, and let the survey go back with whatever they said, no matter how negative, it would have meant nothing, because it was such a badly done survey. It just meant nothing. It was qualitative. They could make headlines to their heart's content. But nobody should believe that somebody three levels down from the chancellor has a broad perspective on the campus or on UCOP. I'm sorry. You know what I mean? They may have an opinion about their specific area. Many of the comments that came back from people were about areas far removed from their own expertise.

And then came the week of a regents meeting. I remember that meeting very well. Regents meetings typically are Wednesday and Thursday. They do have some meetings on Tuesday, which sometimes I have to go to. And there's always, when they're in San Francisco, a dinner on Tuesday night at Janet's apartment. Well, Monday and Tuesday of that week, I was in Alameda at a WASC pre-review. I was the chair of the WASC review of Sacramento State University. The way it works is the committee does visit the campus. But six months before it visits the campus, it holds a two-day meeting to go over all of the written submissions from the campus and decide what kinds of questions for further information we need, and what kinds of issues we want to delve into during our campus visit. So this was that WASC meeting. It took place at WASC headquarters in Alameda. I was the chair of the group, so I was heavily engaged for two days, including in the evening. We worked in the evening as well.

So at the end of the WASC meeting, which ended late in the afternoon on Tuesday, I went directly from the WASC meeting to Janet's house. Normally when I go to these dinners, I will drive to a hotel in San Francisco, where I stay for the regents meeting, dump my stuff, dump my car, take BART over to the Office of the President, and then there's a bus that

takes all of the chancellors from the Office of the President to Janet's place. But I just drove directly to Janet's apartment. I even remember—God, this is a strange detail to remember—I think it was the last time I ever drove to Janet's apartment. I did it a few times, and the previous times they'd always had a parking place for me. But this time there was no parking place, so I had to go park on the street somewhere, which I didn't mind. I wasn't sure I'd find one, but I did.

Anyway, we had this dinner at Janet's house. Now, unbeknownst to me, earlier that day on Tuesday, there was a conference call among all of the chiefs of staff to the chancellors to discuss the audit and what the expectations were with regard to responding to the audit. This was the first really serious discussion anyone was having about that. Ashish was on that call, but Ashish was at the time at a meeting (I think it was an ACE meeting, but I won't swear to that), in Texas; I think in Austin, but I won't swear to that, either. I just know he was in Texas for a meeting and he was flying back that day. So I think what happened was that he was on the call but then he got in an airplane. So even though they were all told to communicate to their chancellors what had happened, Ashish didn't have a chance to do that.

So I walked into that dinner meeting cold.

Reti: Oh, jeez.

Blumenthal: At that meeting, there was a discussion at dinner about the survey. There were two takeaways. One was that Janet said we, as the chancellors, had the authority, and she wanted us to edit the worst of the responses from the campuses to express our own opinions, rather than what had been given to us by people further down the chain. And two, the Office of the President wanted to review all of our submissions before we submitted it. Those are the two takeaways I had from the dinner.

I guess I would also comment that this was probably the only dinner, maybe even the only meeting, I've ever been at with all of the chancellors and the president where I didn't say a word. (Reti laughs) Which is very uncharacteristic of me. Part of it was, in fairness, that I was tired, because I'd been at this long, two-day WASC meeting. But part of it was that it was clear, almost immediately, that everybody else around the table knew a lot more than I did. In fact, I remember that when I was walking out—and Henry even remembered this when we talked about it many months later—Henry said to me as we were walking out, “I bet Ashish didn't brief you on the meeting this afternoon.”

I said, “Yeah. How did you know?”

He said, “You were so quiet. It was clear you were not up to speed here.” Henry knows me pretty well.

So I had those two takeaways. I did understand those two takeaways. But I was kind of upset that I didn't know everything. So I got in touch with Ashish. I don't remember whether I called him that night after dinner because it was usually pretty late by the time we got back to our hotel. Or whether I called him—well, he was at the regents meeting the next day, but I may well have called him early in the morning. I just don't remember. But I called him and we talked. The order to edit the most egregious comments—I wasn't thrilled about that, and I know Ashish wasn't thrilled about that, either. Both of us felt that we should just send in whatever people gave us. But I also felt that I needed to be able to say to the president that I had taken what she had said seriously and edited the most egregious comments. But I didn't want to read all of the comments. I just didn't have any desire to do that.

So I asked Ashish if he would look through the comments and pick out whatever was egregious and needed to be edited by me. He said he would do that. So Ashish did. I can't

remember whether it was one comment or two comments that he sent me, but he did send me something. I got it Wednesday morning. I remember I sat there with my computer at the regents meeting, and while the regents meeting was going on, I edited those comments, which were admittedly a rant about UCOP. I tried to preserve some of the flavor of the comment, but I edited it to make it considerably less opinionated than was submitted, particularly since I knew who submitted it. I'm not saying who it was, but I knew who had submitted that comment. I felt many of those comments were outside that person's realm of expertise.

So I edited it. I didn't feel good about it, but I did it. I sent it back to Ashish and asked him to substitute that for the original response. Now I assumed that Ashish was at least as up to speed as I was, if not more so, because he had been on the call. So I did know that we were supposed to send our responses to the Office of the President. But Ashish didn't know that.

Reti: Oh, because he had gotten off the call partway, and he hadn't been at—

Blumenthal: Well, I don't know if he got off the call partway, or whether that particular aspect wasn't discussed, or whether he didn't hear it. I don't know what the reason was, but he didn't know that. He told me that later and I believe him. There's no question I believed him. But I also have to admit that I was aware that we were supposed to submit them to the Office of the President, even though I thought that was a little bit like the fox guarding the henhouse, so to speak. And I had no intention to not submit it to the Office of the President. But I didn't think any more about it. I figured the process was on its merry way. This is not something I would normally have gotten personally involved with.

The decision had been made what to do and I wasn't all that interested until a couple of days later when I drove to campus. When I got to the Kerr Hall parking lot—I was literally

in the parking lot—I got a call from Janet. She was very angry. She was really angry because she said my chief of staff had submitted the responses from the campus without first sending it to the Office of the President for review. She is now seeing, or the Office of the President is seeing, what was submitted. She characterized it as very damaging to the university. And she was angry. In fact, she repeated this all twice. She went through this all twice with me. You don't usually have to repeat stuff to me. I felt that her tone of voice, the way she was framing it—she was really angry and she kept calling out my chief of staff, which had me both alarmed and puzzled. I was puzzled because in some sense, I'm the chancellor. No matter how it happened, if we screwed up, the buck stops with me. I may have said to her, I didn't know that we had submitted it before review, but still, what happens here is my responsibility. I was also alarmed because she kept pointing her finger at Ashish. I didn't want him to get needlessly into hot water with the president, for God's sake. But she was clearly very, very angry.

I tried to pivot the conversation to where do we go from here. It took me a few minutes to pivot the conversation, but we did. Basically, she was very clear about it. She said she wanted us to withdraw the submission and then have it reviewed and then resubmit. And I said, "Fine, we'll do that."

You have no idea how ignorant I was. I had no idea you could withdraw a submission. I also had some concerns that the act of withdrawing a submission, in and of itself, and then submitting something different, in and of itself, seems to be, you know, suspicious, to say the least. But that's what she told me to do, so I did it. I went to Ashish and I said, "We have to withdraw the submission. Could you do that?" And he did it. As I say, I was puzzled why she was mad at Ashish.

But then it was clear that the Office of the President was going to want to make us make some more changes. There was a lot of stuff in our submission they didn't like. A lot of stuff. I may have cleansed the most egregious responses, but there was a lot of stuff they didn't like.

I made a decision very quickly to do something quite uncharacteristic in that I decided that I would be the point of contact with the Office of the President. Janet had delegated this to Seth Grossman, her chief of staff, so I had some email and text exchanges with Seth. Clearly, he wanted me to actually be interacting with his assistant, Bernie Jones. Normally I would have asked Ashish to be the contact person with the Office of the President. I don't think Ashish would have wanted to do it. I think he didn't feel comfortable with this whole business. But more than that, I've asked him to do many things that he's felt uncomfortable about over the years, and I don't like dealing with this kind of stuff. But I also was a little alarmed by Janet's attribution to Ashish of the incorrect submission of this thing, and I didn't want to put him at risk. If he wasn't going to do it, I didn't know who else could do it but me. So I said I would be the point of contact, which I did not like doing.

What ensued was a lot of emails and text messages and stuff back and forth between me and Seth, and between me and Bernie Jones. They had a lot of cleansing they wanted to do. They wanted many changes. First of all, I didn't feel good about this. Secondly, to be blunt, I didn't particularly like being yelled at by Janet.

I had gotten a clear message from her that what was coming from Santa Cruz was harmful for the system and it had to be changed. I felt that message was very clear. They came back to me with a pile of changes they wanted and I changed about 90 percent of them. Some of them I didn't agree with, but I changed them anyway. Then they pushed back on

the other 10 percent. They kept pushing back. Finally, I just caved on everything, even their arguments on some of the things that I felt strongly about. There were statements that were made that I actually agree with that they were objecting to. It's one thing to say I as chancellor can make some changes because I run the campus and my word is biblical on the campus. You could say that and maybe make a case for that. But there were things that I agreed with completely in responses that they were pushing on me to change. Most of those, they argued, were outside the legitimate scope of the audit. Now I don't know from nothing about what's inside or outside the scope of an audit. But that was the argument that they were making.

But on the other hand, I felt, look, I knew the relationship between Seth and Janet well. Just to give you a bit of background here—Seth came to UC with Janet from Homeland Security. Seth and Janet, sitting together in an office—just the two of them—were the people who came up with the idea of TSA Precheck. They had realized that TSA was bogging down with lines that were way too long. It was not scalable. The whole system would come to a halt unless they did something. So they literally sat together, talked about what they might do, and came up with the TSA Precheck idea, which they put into place. So Janet and Seth were really close. When I had issues over the years that I needed to get to Janet, I would go through Seth frequently, because Janet isn't easy to get to. I had no hesitation. I always felt that when I talked to Seth, I was talking to Janet. So from my perspective, Seth and Janet were synonymous. Bernie Jones I didn't know as well. But if he was working for Seth, and Seth said he's the guy I should be emailing with, then that's who I emailed with. When Bernie said this really needs to be changed, I interpreted this as basically coming from Janet. I don't know that Janet was reading all those emails. I don't know whether she was or wasn't. I suspect not. But I suspect she gave the global order to cleanse everything. And ultimately, I caved.

I'll give you an example. An example was UC Path. Our submission talked about the first two or three years of UC Path, and how completely incompetent the operation of UC Path was. They did say that it was getting better under new leadership, but that they hadn't considered a number of issues and weren't really thinking quite as strategically about what needed to be done before we went live. I didn't write that response, but I completely agreed with it. I initially refused to change that. Then the argument was, this was out of scope. So, what can I say? Again, I felt that Seth had basically the delegation from Janet, and he was speaking for her. She was, after all, my boss.

So that was how our response to the audit came together. In hindsight, well, I mean, lots of things we would do differently in hindsight. But anyway, that's why I did what I did.

Ultimately, the report was released. And the you-know-what hit the fan. The auditor knew that responses had been changed. They had been changed at virtually all of the campuses.

Reti: Wait. How did the auditor know that?

Blumenthal: I'm sure people blabbed. Come on, there were just too many cooks making this broth here. The auditor was mad. Seeing that particular auditor mad was not a pleasant sight. When she gave her presentation to the regents, I mean, maybe this was not very nice of me, but I leaned over to the chancellor sitting next to me and said, "I would not want to meet her in a dark alley." (laughter) She is a scary person.

Anyway, it hit the fan. Janet then publicly said, "No, no, no, she had nothing to do with this. The chancellors all made these changes." It was probably literally true in the sense that we, or I, did make changes, but I felt it was at her direction.

So that's what happened. That was all presented at the regents meeting. Of course, it led to many headlines and had many consequences, many of which we are still feeling at the university today, as I will discuss.

But the first thing that happened was two major investigations. I'm not sure of the order here. One was the auditor's investigation. The auditor did a whistleblower investigation of SurveyGate, what happened. And unfortunately, the auditor's whistleblower investigation was never released to the public, unlike all other auditor reports. I gather with whistleblower complaints there's a lot of discretion for what happens. The whistleblower audit report was provided to the two leaders, or maybe the four leaders in the legislature, one of each party, plus probably the governor, plus the chair of the regents. The chair of the regents made it available for regents to read in a room without taking notes, and a decision was made never to release it.

The auditors sent some lawyers here to campus to interview me as a part of their investigation. This was very uncomfortable because I wanted to do this interview in the presence of Lorena Peñaloza, who's our campus counsel. I recognize Lorena does not represent me personally; she represents the campus. But I felt that there is a campus interest in what was happening, and having Lorena here would lend some constraints on the nature of this investigation. I was distrustful of the investigators, although in fairness to them, they had, number one, done their homework. Number two, these were lawyers, these were professionals. Overall, I had a much higher impression of them than I did of the auditor. I was even quite honest with them about what I thought about Elaine Howle. I was quite honest with them about what I thought. They told me that they were in a part of the auditor's office which is separated from the part that does audits. They do investigations. I thought their questions to me were professional, and I had no objections. I did try to make them uncomfortable by asserting that I did have the right to counsel

present. They didn't deny that. But they also had every email I ever sent. They had simply exercised their authority to get all of my emails, which they went through, which included the emails particularly with Bernie and Seth.

As I say, their report was never published. It was never released. The people who got to see it, the people on the regents, were able to do so only under confidentiality. I know a little bit about what's in the report for two reasons. One, because there are a few people who had seen it who told me a little bit about it. And two, because one person who did get a copy of it was the lead education reporter for the *LA Times*, Teresa Watanabe.³⁴⁶ So Teresa had a conversation with me at one point. I actually speak periodically to Teresa. I think she's the best higher education reporter in California right now, by far. In one of our conversations she told me she did get a copy of the investigatory report. But other than making some allusions to it, she never really revealed all that was in it. I did hear that it was actually more critical of the president than the next report that was done, which I'll talk about.

What troubled me, and I'm not sure exactly where in this process that happened, but basically my email exchanges were released to the press. You can imagine my astonishment to look in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and see my email exchanges with Seth and with Bernie in the *Chronicle*. You know, without the context of how those happened, they sure didn't look good. I was glad that there had been this investigation, because it at least gave me a chance to say my side of the story. I was really upset by the release of the emails. I really thought I was going to get a lot of questions, for example, at the Academic Senate meeting. In fact, I decided I was just going to mention the audit and mention the investigations, and not really say much, and let people ask me questions and deal with it however I could feel I could deal with it, and probably be honest, without

revealing anything confidential. But, in fact, nobody did ask me those questions. Reporters have asked me questions, but there's a limit to what I would say to them.

Meanwhile, the regents decided to do their own investigation. So they hired Carlos Moreno, the former justice of the California Supreme Court, to lead an investigation which was parallel to the one being done by the auditor. Moreno worked with a law firm and they did their own extensive investigation which was to be reported to the regents, which later became known as the Moreno Report. They also came to campus. I think they interviewed me for maybe twice as long as the state auditors. By then, I knew I couldn't have campus counsel present. That had been a decision by Office of General Counsel. I thought that the Moreno investigators were much better prepared, even, than the auditor's investigators. They had read more of my emails. They had a more nuanced view of what had happened before they even walked into the room. And at one point I said something and they contradicted it and show me an email from me contradicting it and I was impressed because my error was inadvertent. But they were very well prepared.

Ultimately, they released the Moreno Report. The Moreno Report is publicly available, so you can read it on the web. I think by and large it treated my evidence fairly. A few things I might have expanded on a bit more, but I don't have any objection to how they characterized what I said. But what was shocking when I read the Moreno report was how Janet denied that she gave orders to me to either—I don't remember whether she denied she gave orders to withdraw the report, or whether she denied she asked me to modify the report in a way to make it less objectionable. But she certainly denied she was angry when she had that phone call with me. It was a very different characterization of our phone conversation, very different. I understand that sometimes people can have different perceptions of the same thing, but I also don't believe that I was wrong. So of course, it was very awkward.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, before the regents met to deal with the SurveyGate issue, we had another chancellors dinner. (Reti laughs) I, of course, had no intention of saying anything about SurveyGate. I was really in an awkward position, because my boss and I are now on the record saying very different things about what happened.

Reti: Were you the only chancellor in that position?

Blumenthal: I was the only chancellor who had to withdraw his submission. I was not the only chancellor who had to make changes. At that meeting, I remember Dorothy Leland in the course of the dinner said to Janet, “Janet, the chancellors have talked among ourselves,” which we had, “and we believe that your characterization of the audit,” (I don’t think she used “SurveyGate” as a word), but, “your characterization of the audit report is not consistent with our recollections of what happened.” I hadn’t even talked to Dorothy. She was saying that for herself and others. The chancellors had met and discussed our unhappiness with what was going on. So she said that.

The next person who spoke was Ralph Hexter, EVC at Davis, who was then the acting chancellor at Davis.³⁴⁷ He said, “I am very uncomfortable having this conversation without counsel present.” That put an end to that conversation.

Then we had the regents meeting where they had to deal with SurveyGate. We all knew it was coming. We all knew it was coming on Thursday. I had made a decision I was going to stay till the bitter end, no matter how late that was. Of course, I couldn’t be there in the regents-only sessions, but I wanted to stay.

Reti: What do you mean you couldn’t be there?

Blumenthal: I couldn’t be in the meeting, because it was regents-only, without Janet.

Reti: I see. So you were staying where?

Blumenthal: There are these rooms off to the side where you can hang out.

Reti: I see, so that you could be present in the building.

Blumenthal: Right. In fact, it turned out that it took so long—I think they met for like six hours in closed session—it took so long that the only chancellors who were left at the end were Henry and me. And Henry, I think, only stuck around because I had promised to drive him to the airport.

During one of the bus rides that we took—and we take bus rides to the regents meeting, from the hotel with regents; we take bus rides to dinners sometimes—on one of those bus rides, John Pérez was there; I think he was the only regent in the bus. There were something like four chancellors and John. Maybe there was another regent, but that person didn't participate. I remember that bus ride because the chancellors kept asking John about what was going to happen as a result of the scandal. They kept pressing him on his perceptions, really kept pressing him. I was silent. I just sat in my seat and I did not say a word. I was feeling vulnerable and angry and hurt and uncomfortable. I don't even know all of the adjectives to use to describe how I was feeling, but I was not a happy camper. I was not happy to be in that bus hearing that conversation. It made me very uncomfortable.

When we got off the bus, I started to walk away. John came over to me and he looked at me and he said, "George, I just want you to know, I have talked to almost every one of the regents and there isn't a single regent that doesn't believe your version of the events." I felt a lot better hearing that.

So, they had their meeting.

I didn't want Janet to get fired. I didn't want the university to be hurt. I wasn't looking for vindication. I was looking for resolution and moving on. I'd had a conversation some weeks earlier with George Kiefer, the chair of the regents, and he basically had asked me, "What do you think should happen with regard to Janet?" I basically had said to him, I think that it's important that we find a way to move on. I don't want Janet to be fired because of my testimony with regard to what happened. I just don't think that that's appropriate. I think we should stay the course with her and find a way out of this." I think the Moreno report was an effort by the regents to find a way out of this by being public and open.

Anyway, they eventually finished their closed meeting. Many of the regents had left. At the end of that meeting, Janet was called in. Janet was read what the result was, which was some form of censure for her. I don't remember the exact characterization, but it was a form of censure for her activities in SurveyGate. Then she was forced to read an apology, a kind of mea culpa apology publicly, which she did. I think probably this was negotiated while they were meeting with her. So she did that. Then the meeting ended. There weren't that many regents that were there at the end.

Reti: And this is a closed session?

Blumenthal: No, this was all open.

Reti: This is open. So this is on public record.

Blumenthal: Her mea culpa and the reading by George of conclusion was all in public session. That's why I stuck around, so that I could find out what the result was.

I felt unsatisfied afterwards. I was unsatisfied and a little bit angry. I just felt like somehow all we did as a university was shoot ourselves in the foot. I don't know, it just didn't feel—

I couldn't even put it into words. I know I expressed my dissatisfaction quite strongly to Henry, maybe *very* strongly to Henry on the way to the airport. So much so that Henry is convinced, wrongly so, that my decision to retire a couple years later was based upon what happened in SurveyGate. That's not true. But Henry believes it.

Reti: That was several years ago that this all took place.

Blumenthal: Yes. Now prior to the regents meeting, it was clear that both Seth and Bernie were going to be held accountable in some ways. Janet's official position was that Seth and Bernie had gone rogue; they had taken her general orders and carried them out much further than she had ever intended in her wildest dreams. They had acted inappropriately and they had gone rogue. I think the regents were prepared to, in some ways, to discipline Seth for this. However, prior to the regents meeting, Seth resigned from the university and took a job as the chief of staff at another university. Bernie had resigned and gone to something else, I don't remember what. I've never seen Seth or Bernie since.

One of my reasons for feeling unhappy, going back to the airport with Henry, was how Seth was treated. There were people who didn't like Seth. But he's a chief of staff. His job is to do some of the difficult, uncomfortable things. I've always liked Seth. I thought he was a fair player. He genuinely tried to do the right thing and to serve his boss: Janet. He was very loyal to her. And so, for me to see him kind of thrown in the wastebasket just struck me as wrong in so many ways. I mean, here I was—I was trying to protect Ashish, when I feared that Janet might be really angry at him, by leaving him out of this whole business. And here Janet took her chief of staff and basically threw him in the trash. I cannot even begin to tell you how much that bothered me. Of all of the things that Janet

did—I can forgive her for a lot—but I can't really forgive her for how she treated Seth. I'm sure he took a bullet for her.

It's kind of ironic. Just two weeks ago when we had our Council of Chancellors meeting, we had breakfast. The chancellors tend to have breakfast together these days. Pradeep mentioned that he ran into Seth in Washington, D.C. and had a nice conversation with him. He is very bitter, and he's very bitter toward Janet, which I found interesting, because I always wondered whether or not he had just taken the bullet and said, "It's part of my job," or whatever. But according to Pradeep, he is bitter today. Yeah. What else do I want to say about that? That was one of the things that I was most angry about, was this sense that you could just dispose of people.

Well, I mentioned that there were long-term consequences. I mentioned the long-term consequence of having to do these twenty or thirty things that were required by the auditor. They're doing it, but that's taking a huge amount of time by people like Rachel Nava, who took over as chief of staff. So Rachel now is both the chief operating officer, and the chief of staff to the president. Both of those are difficult jobs, and she's doing both of them at once, which I think is untenable. Now she's also been in charge of dealing with the auditor recommendations. I don't know how she could possibly do all of that and stay sane. I worry about her. I actually do. She's a banana slug, so she can handle a lot, but—
(Reti laughs)

What about my relationship with Janet? That's actually worked out okay. The next time I saw Janet after the infamous regents meeting—oh, I didn't mention. I'm sorry, before we get there, I didn't mention that I heard from some of my sources from inside the regents meeting that Janet was very lucky because some of the regents had to leave to catch airplanes, and therefore, some of the regents weren't there for the vote on what to do

about her. And at least my informants told me that those regents were not well-disposed toward her situation. I also found out what the vote was from my impeccable source, Teresa Watanabe, who knew what the vote was. She said it was nine to six, and the six dissenters wanted something much more severe.

Anyway, the next time I met Janet was in Watsonville. Every year we do this program which is sponsored by the Office of the President. I go to some area underserved high school and give a talk and meet with students. We explain things like the Blue and Gold plan, explain why financial factors shouldn't limit them from coming to UC, encouraging them all to go to college. I do this event every year. That year, Janet came to the event in Watsonville. Janet and I were in the front of the room, each giving a spiel and then answering questions. It was all very pleasant. Then during the questions, somebody asked Janet what she was doing for DACA students. So she reeled off a bunch of the programs she had put in place for DACA students. But then I interjected and said, "Janet forgot to mention one that I think is very important." She had started, on her own volition, a program for lawyers from UC Davis to serve DACA students throughout the UC system and provide legal advice for both the students themselves and for their families. I think that was a really important initiative that really shows the commitment of the university. And this was her initiative."

After I said that, Janet leaned over to me and said, "Thank you." And I think that was kind of the thawing of the situation. Then at lunch, at that event, Janet and I found ourselves in the middle of a crowd, but sometimes you can have a moment alone in the middle of a crowd. She acknowledged that she had a very different perception of the call that we had had; I acknowledged that her perception was different than mine, and we talked a little bit about the changes that might take place going forward. I viewed it as kind of a reconciliation moment. It was my five minutes or ten minutes when we could have that

conversation, amidst the chaos of everyone getting their lunch. So we did have the conversation. I later learned that, at least with the other chancellors, Janet called each of them to apologize. So we all found a way to move on.

I think I should say that one of the implications, one of the things that was very interesting that was an outgrowth of this had to do with the chancellors. Maybe I can take a minute to talk about that. Until maybe three or four years ago (this is before SurveyGate hit the fan), during my time as chancellor, there had never been an occasion, ever, where the chancellors met alone, in the absence of the president. Never. To me, that's quite astonishing. The EVCs meet alone. Other groups meet alone, do an executive session or whatever. Chancellors had never done that. There are individual chancellors who have relationships, so maybe two would get together, maybe three or something. But we never had a meeting of all of the chancellors.

The first such meeting actually occurred when the issue of Berkeley's \$150 million structural deficit came before the regents in closed session. At the time, closed session was not open for chancellors. Nick Dirks was still the chancellor for Berkeley, and he was supposed to give a presentation about his \$150 million structural deficit. And it was closed. For several reasons, I decided to organize a dinner of the chancellors. Maybe Janet couldn't have a dinner, I don't remember exactly. I think Janet didn't have a dinner that night. Maybe the regents meeting was somewhere else. It may have been in Sacramento. But I organized a dinner for all of the chancellors and they all came, somewhat to my surprise. In the course of the dinner, we were talking about the agenda. Nick was talking about how overjoyed (just kidding) he was to be making this presentation the next day in closed session.

I said to him, "Nick, would you feel better if the chancellors were present?"

He said, "I'd feel a lot better if the chancellors were present."

I said, "You want me to try?" He said yeah. So that night I got in touch with Janet and asked her if she had any objections to the chancellors being present.

Let me interrupt myself briefly, if I might. When I first became chancellor, chancellors were present at all closed sessions, but not at regents-only sessions. That persisted until Mark Yudof became president. When Mark became president, he barred everyone except regents at closed sessions, thereby eliminating the distinction between regents-only and closed. I objected at the time and argued that there were legitimate reasons why chancellors should be present in closed session, that we could learn important things that would be of benefit to the campus, etcetera. And I talked about how strange it was that I could be in regents-only sessions, much less closed sessions, as the faculty representative, but barred as a chancellor. Mark didn't buy any of those arguments, so we were barred from it. That continued into Janet's presidency and that long had bothered me.

So anyway, I contacted Janet and asked her whether or not the chancellors could be present for next session. She said, "It's fine by me, as long as the chair of the regents is okay with it."

I said, "Do you want me to contact the chair of the regents?" She said yeah. So I contacted Monica Lozano³⁴⁸ and I asked her if it was okay.

She said, "If it's okay with Nick, it's okay with me."

I said, "Definitely it's okay with Nick."

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So chancellors were present at Nick's presentation, which actually was quite interesting, because I'm not sure I completely understood the origin of the structural deficit after Nick's presentation, but after I came back and talked to Peggy Delaney, I finally did understand how Berkeley got into so much trouble.

Anyway, emboldened by that success, I raised with Janet at a Council of Chancellors meeting, whether or not we could relax the Yudof prohibition and re-admit chancellors at closed session. Janet said it was fine with her, and she'd have to clear it with the regents.

I think we had another chancellors meeting and nothing was said. Then we had a regents meeting. The night before the regents meeting, I asked Janet what had happened. She said, "Oh, I guess I forgot to tell you guys. You're all free to come to closed session." So starting then we could get into closed sessions, not, of course, regents-only, but closed session. Which I still think was the right thing to do. I think I did well on that one.

Anyway, as SurveyGate started to heat up, I decided to organize another meeting of the chancellors just to talk about general concerns. So I organized a meeting of the chancellors during a regents meeting, during one of the regents-only sessions. We all met. It was a very good meeting and people liked it and wanted to do this more often. We let down our hair in ways that doesn't happen elsewhere.

So I talked to UC Irvine Chancellor Howard Gillman³⁴⁹ and we finally settled on organizing breakfast for the chancellors prior to every Council of Chancellors meeting. Council of Chancellors usually starts at ten o'clock. Many chancellors have meetings at nine, including, sometimes, me. So we've tended to organize breakfast at 7:00 or 7:30, where the chancellors could meet and have breakfast together across the street. I don't know if Janet knows that we started doing this. Howard is the organizer-in-chief, which is probably good, since I'm leaving. We've done it virtually every month for the last at least

year and a half, maybe two years. I think they've been good discussions. They've often been a good prelude to the Council of Chancellors meeting. Sometimes I'm a little disappointed in my colleagues because they'll raise things at these breakfasts much more strongly than they'll raise it at CoC. That's never stopped me. It's funny. I never worry about things like that. But in any event, they have been good and very helpful discussions and I'm glad we're doing it. Even though Howard organizes them, I take a certain amount of pride in seeing this happen. I think that's been very helpful.

Let's see. What else to say here?

Before we leave SurveyGate, I want to admit that SurveyGate took a big toll on me. I was under a lot of stress, felt under a lot of stress throughout that. I think it was all stupid. I think that if we had done nothing with these surveys and just let the auditor have them, I don't think she could have made any sense out of them. I think she could have said, "Oh, everybody's all critical of the Office of the President. But so what else is new?" I think she couldn't have even gotten a very coherent message. It would all have died away quite easily. Again, Henry is convinced this is why I'm retiring. I think the stress of SurveyGate took its toll. Maybe that contributes in some ways. But it's only one of fifteen considerations that I went through when I made the decision to retire. To a large extent, it's past. I didn't even have all that much stress writing up my notes for this, which was interesting because I think a year ago I would have felt stressed doing it.

A couple more comments about SurveyGate. Subsequent to SurveyGate, I'd had a very positive and I think supportive relationship with Janet. I've never sensed hostility or any residual resentment from her, and I hope she's never felt that from me. I think we've gotten past it as two professionals should. So it isn't something that particularly concerns

me about our relationship. I believe that we have a pretty good relationship. I say that in the spirit of saying that she was able to get past it.

The Impact of the Trump Administration on UCSC and Higher Education

Reti: Great. Okay. Now we're going to move on to talking about the change at the federal level in fall of 2016 with the election of President Donald Trump in 2016 and what impact that has had on UCSC, partially in terms of immigration policy, but other areas as well.

Blumenthal: Well, Trump's election was a sea change in many ways for the campus, maybe the community, and certainly the country. As I think about the implications of Trump's election, I think of it in terms of two general categories: practical, pragmatic issues and more symbolic issues. So let me try to take them in that order.

In terms of practical issues, there're some that are pretty obvious, one of which is DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals]. One of Trump's first efforts was to eliminate DACA. He was prevented from doing that by a series of court cases, some of which were initiated by UC and by Janet.³⁵⁰ Janet was the one who came up with DACA for the Obama administration. And those court cases have been quite successful.

But I want to point out to you two or three things first. From the standpoint of our DACA students, successful though they may have been, they've got to be feeling really vulnerable. Secondly, DACA has survived in court cases because the Trump administration didn't follow appropriate procedures in terms of eliminating DACA. But at the end of the day, DACA was created by the president, and DACA can be eliminated by the president, if they go through the right procedures and safeguards. So it is a rearguard action to preserve DACA. That's all we're fighting when we go to court. And third, even though we have so far saved DACA, that doesn't affect new students who are not eligible for DACA. So the longer DACA remains, the more it becomes the safeguard

for older students that have been in the system. New frosh coming in can't become a new DACA student; you can just renew your old DACA status based upon the court cases.

So de facto, DACA is disappearing as a safeguard. That leads us back to where we were in the pre-DACA days, when students on campus feel unbelievably vulnerable. Although we've always said that we would not help federal agents or ICE come onto campus and catch students who didn't have visas or appropriate documentation—we've had to reiterate that many times—but it still provides limited assurances to our students who are not documented, because it only takes once for them. They are very much at risk and they *feel* very much at risk.

And for those students who cannot become DACA students, we can't even give them the kind of financial aid necessarily that we were able to put together for DACA students. So the situation is getting worse, rather than getting better, for sure. And I just would remind you, many of these students, particularly DACA students, have been in the country for many years. Many of them are scared to death of being deported to countries where they don't even speak the language, in some cases. It's a human tragedy.

And it isn't just DACA students—there's a growing list of students who are undocumented, who are not DACA students. The president has created fear among an ever-increasing group of very legitimate members of our community. And that contributes to the climate on campus and a sense of fear on campus that is just kind of amazing.

But it isn't just even them. I've sensed that for non-resident students who are coming in on legitimate visas, the United States does not feel welcoming anymore in quite the same way that as a country we used to feel. If you're from China, now you're coming into a country that you're in a trade war with. If you're from Mexico or Canada, then there're all these trade issues between Mexico and Canada and the US. It's not that students care

about trade, but they do care about being dehumanized, which is what happens when you're in a conflict. So I think all of that is really unfortunate in terms of universities in general, or our campus in particular, being able to reach out and be seen as a truly international campus.

The same is true of foreign visitors. It becomes harder to get visas. Can it be done? Of course it can be done. But it gets harder and harder and harder, particularly if you come from what President Trump calls "one of those shithole countries." So it is increasingly challenging.

And then there are policy issues that face the campus from Washington. Did I tell you the story about meeting Betsy DeVos³⁵¹ in Washington?

Reti: No, we have not talked about that.

Blumenthal: So one of the organizations that I've been fairly active in and going to meetings of, both annual big meetings, as well as meetings that they periodically have for presidents of universities, is the APLU, the Association of Public Land Grant Universities. A few months after Trump was elected, a few months after DeVos was confirmed by the senate by one vote, there was a meeting of the presidents of APLU universities. It was only the presidents; it wasn't the big meeting. But on the agenda, they had a couple of cabinet secretaries giving talks, the most memorable of which was Betsy DeVos. I was at this meeting. It was pretty early in the morning. I had just flown into Washington and I was really tired. Usually, even when I fly to Washington, I try to get up and exercise, and these meetings start at 7:30, so it's a challenge for someone from the West Coast. So I was pretty tired. The meeting was pretty small. There were about, I don't know, between thirty and forty presidents in the room. Betsy DeVos came and gave a talk, which was relatively content-free. It didn't really say much that was new or interesting.

But then they opened it up for questions. I had thought I was going to be very passive, because I was tired. I figured there would be a pile of people that wanted to ask her questions. But nobody raised their hand. So I raised my hand; I decided I would jump into the breach. I asked her a question. I first reminded her that in the United States, 70 percent of all bachelor's degrees are granted at public universities. I also wanted to remind her that twenty-five years ago, the United States was number one in the world in the percentage of twenty-five to thirty-five-year-olds with bachelor's degrees. Today we had fallen to number seventeen in the world. And I said, "My question is, does this decline in our position with regard to higher education concern you at all, as the secretary of education, in terms of the future of American competitiveness?"

Her answer, which I can almost quote in its entirety, was, "No, I'm not at all concerned because as long as we remain innovative and entrepreneurial, we will do just fine."

That answer had a big effect on me. It served as a motivator for me to think of some of the higher education policy issues that our country faces. And it kind of flew in the face of an op-ed that I'd already written about what the future role of the federal government should be in higher education. I found that a highly motivating moment in my life.

The Education Department, of course, has a lot of sway over policy. They've been trying to change a lot of things. One is Title IX. Title IX had changed a lot under President Obama. It had changed so much that it was becoming somewhat challenging for UC to comply with the new Title IX requirements, particularly in view of the fact that for faculty UC applies a stricter standard for discipline than the Department of Education found acceptable. We got around that because our Title IX investigations use the federal criteria. But that's different than disciplining for faculty.

Immediately, we were starting to hear about rolling back Title IX, rolling back the requirements that a preponderance of the evidence would prevail; coming up with the notion of direct cross-examination of survivors of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Direct cross-examination is difficult, and there are other ways that it can be handled. Coming up against the fact that students under the new rules would have a right to a full evidentiary hearing with representation by counsel. That was clearly going to make it very difficult to discipline students for sexual harassment or sexual assault.

So that's a story that's still in process. The initial rules seem pretty bad. On the other hand, they got lots of commentary. Probably what they'll do is they'll wait long enough so it looks like they read the commentary, and then they'll issue the same rules again. But we'll see. We'll see what really happens. But I do worry about Title IX and Title IX becoming more problematic.

Student loans—it's clear that the Trump administration, or DeVos in particular, is going to get tougher on student loans with regard to alternative repayment methods, as well as relief from student loans for those who want to do public service, which we always do want to encourage people to do. And they're doing new ideas in terms of loan repayment, which will be much more difficult, particularly for students who choose to do public service while having to pay off their student loans.

Reti: Like Teach for America?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Stuff like that.

I think also they're going to be more liberal on student loans for for-profit colleges, which I also am opposed to because this is just feeding money from the federal government into the private sector without necessarily benefiting students. If this were accompanied by an upgrade to the oversight of private, for-profit colleges, I would think about it a little bit

differently, maybe. But that's not the case. It's really private sector uber alles. A lot of that money that they spend on loans for those students who end up not getting degrees could be so much better spent on students at legitimate universities and colleges. So that's another change.

Then there's the Pell Grant story, which is not entirely bad. The one thing that the Department of Education has done that I fully approve of is they have now allowed Pell grants to be used during the summer. That was long overdue. It should have happened years earlier. But this Department of Education did it. I think we have to give them credit.

On the other hand, I worry that there isn't the commitment to continuation of the Pell program at the same level that it's already occurring. UC has twice the number of Pell students as do other state universities nationally. That's so impressive. We're doing so well in terms of educating students who qualify for Pell grants.

Now it is true that the number of students qualifying for Pell grants is declining nationally because the economy is doing well. But still, I think there should be this remaining commitment. And maybe, if we are spending less, or if there are fewer Pell students, we should consider increasing their grants, or extending the criteria a little bit, rather than just pulling it back.

So those are all worrisome aspects of what's going on at the education department. And I'm sure there's stuff that I can't even think of, that would be worrisome as well. It was interesting, on my most recent trip to Washington, I had dinner with Martha Kanter, who was the undersecretary of education under Obama. Previously, she was the chancellor of Foothill-De Anza Community College District. Martha's an old friend. Martha has very little regard for any of the reasoning that goes on now in the Department of Education. She's quite disdainful of it.

The next major area where the Trump administration has had a real influence is in research. On the one hand, they've tried to do significant cuts in funding for research. Agencies like the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, NASA—NIH, maybe a little bit less so, but certainly including NIH—they've proposed huge cuts in funding to those agencies. Fortunately, Congress has not gone along with that. So it is yet to be seen what will happen going forward. My fear is that if we end up in a recession, the Trump administration will succeed in significant cuts to those agencies. I think that's potentially one of the most long-term serious things that they could be doing.

Reti: The attack on science.

Blumenthal: Yeah. And, of course, Trump wants to eliminate the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. He's proposed eliminating both of those. Again, they've survived. It's not like they've got huge chunks of money. But I think it's important what they do and I think it's symbolic to have them there doing it.

The other thing that the Trump administration has done—it has caused a lot of fear that data will be not preserved on environmental or climate issues. So for example, on our campus, we have a faculty member who's been a national leader in preserving data from the Environmental Protection Agency and NASA, NOAA, and other federal agencies that had been obtained by those agencies, but which there was fear would be destroyed by the Trump administration. So they've been preserving data.

But I also worry that the Trump administration is preventing federal scientists from doing fair and accurate assessments of climate change because of their ideological belief that climate change, if it exists at all, is not due to human intervention. I think that is a strong conclusion based on little evidence; the evidence is actually very strongly leads one to conclude there's a connection to human beings causing climate change. Of course Mr.

Trump believes that although he doesn't have a scientific education, his intuition is so strong, it's enough to make him a good scientist, as he said in one interview. So we shall see.

I will say for Trump that he appointed somebody who seems pretty good to be his science advisor. That's all to the plus. On the other hand, I worry about agencies like, for example, the Department of Energy, where the person who's now the secretary of energy has zero knowledge of the kind of energy research that's done by the Department of Energy, or of the Department of Energy's obligations to preserve the nuclear stockpile. Apparently upon taking office, he thought that the main role of the Department of Energy was to push for more gas and oil exploration.

So those are kind of the practical issues that the Trump administration has pushed.

I'm equally concerned, maybe even more concerned, about some of the symbolic issues and symbolic changes that have emanated and become pervasive in society as a result of the Trump administration. The idea of false news is anti-intellectual. His administration has certainly provided a divisiveness in society which affects us all. There aren't that many Trump supporters at UCSC, but we're not isolated from the rest of society. The lack of tolerance in the administration and in Washington, D.C., for other viewpoints, I believe, has translated onto the campus. People of the left and people of the right have developed an unwillingness to tolerate opposing views, or to hear opposing views. I think that has become much more acute of late. It has also become quite noticeable, at least to me, that there's a tendency to Satanize those who have views other than your own. Most people are not satans. Most people are well-meaning people wanting to do right. And yet they find themselves Satanized by those holding different views, which I find deeply disturbing.

I would say that since Trump was elected, the general campus climate has declined. By climate, I'm not talking about racial climate, per se, I'm talking about—I mean, racial issues are one thing, because that's also been an issue—but I'm talking about the willingness to talk to each other, willingness to accept that people have different views, willingness to believe that others are acting in good faith. I've seen an increase in aggressive behavior towards those who you disagree with. I've seen that a lot on campus. We've seen it nationally; we saw it at Berkeley as well, demonstrations around some of their speech events. I find this very disturbing, particularly for a university, which is supposed to be the place where people can air their views, their differences, analyze it, debate it, and where we like to think the truth will win out. And since we're not seeing that on a national scale now, I'm not sure that the universities can continue to do that. I worry more about these symbolic issues than I do about the practical issues I mentioned before, even though the practical issues do have real consequences.

Reti: Thank you. Those are important thoughts to get on the record at this historical moment.

Blumenthal: I even see some of it permeating, not just the campus but also the community. If you look at the current city council—which has changed its political makeup just in the last election, but that does happen periodically—there seems to be a level of intolerance by some faction on the city council of opposing views and a certain amount of Satanization taking place there as well. It amazed me at a recent Chamber of Commerce breakfast that one of the members of the board of supervisors, Ryan Coonerty, in his remarks, had to stand up and defend the ethics and persona of the mayor of Santa Cruz, Martine Watkins, who is an extremely good person. He actually had to get up and defend her. That just amazed me. And it turned out that at the city council meeting the night before, she had been personally attacked by other members of the council. I think

for us, in our society, that's just appalling. So it's not just universities; it's pervasive throughout society in ways that are much more acute than we've seen for a long time.

Reti: And certainly that would have implications for town/gown relations as the university and the city try to work out the growth of the campus.

Blumenthal: Yes. And frankly, I've seen a little bit of this in our recent controversies, like Student Housing West. It's one thing to differ, because people can have different perspectives. It's another to Satanize those who disagree with you.

Serving on the Board of Keck Observatory

Okay, the Keck board. So the University of California has now for twenty-five years operated the Keck Observatory in partnership with Caltech.³⁵² It was originally funded by Caltech through a gift from the Keck Foundation, and UC agreed to pay the operating expenses of the observatory until our relative contributions with Caltech were equal. The UC part of Keck was run through UCO, which is headquartered at Santa Cruz. The Keck telescopes are ten meters in diameter, with a revolutionary segmented mirror design developed by UCSC's Jerry Nelson. They have been, throughout most of these last twenty-five years, the largest telescopes in the world, and by far the most productive ground-based telescopes in the world, based upon either number of papers per telescope annually, or the number of PhDs given for work on the telescope, way above every other telescope in the world. And that's on a per-telescope basis. You have to divide by two, because there's two telescopes. The only telescope that's consistently outperformed Keck has been the Hubble space telescope, which is a different kettle of fish.

Keck is overseen by and run by a board of directors called the CARA board, California Association for Research in Astronomy, and has been since its inception. That board has three board members appointed by the president of Caltech, and three board members

appointed by the president of UC. Typically, UC has appointed someone like the provost, someone like the UCO director. I think the director of UCO has always been one of the three UC board members—and I think that has and should continue forever—and then a third person who might, in some cases, be a finance person or whatever.

When I was the acting chancellor, the three people on the Keck board from UC were the director of UCO, who was Mike Bolte³⁵³—I think Mike had just been appointed by me, actually—and then a guy from UC Riverside who was their chief financial officer at Riverside; and a chancellor, France Cordova also from Riverside. France is an astronomer. However, about ten months into my acting chancellorship, France resigned from UC to become the president of Purdue University, leaving an opening on the board. Now, already there had been a question about who should serve as the director of the TMT board, the thirty-meter telescope board. The thirty-meter telescope was going to be the next major initiative. Keck's telescopes were ten meters. We wanted to build a scaled-up version at thirty meters with Caltech. So the president had to appoint some board members, and I think very, very wisely, Bob Dynes at a meeting turned to a very surprised Henry Yang and suggested that he should chair the TMT board.

Henry was surprised by this. He didn't say yes; he said he wanted to think about it. And he ended up thinking about it for something like three or four months while I was behind the scenes, twisting his arm behind the scenes, because I really wanted Henry to do this, partly because, I will admit, because I thought this was beyond my capabilities, and partly because I thought Henry would be ideal since he's an engineer. He also is one of those people who just talks to everyone and therefore could possibly talk to the Native Hawaiians, who I knew were going to be problematic with regard to this telescope. And he also had another advantage, which I didn't appreciate at the time, but it was a

humungous advantage, which was that the president of Caltech, Jean-Lou Chameau,³⁵⁴ was a former student of his.

Henry took his time. He consulted with the astronomers at Santa Barbara and ultimately, very reluctantly, agreed to do this. Henry has continued to do this over all these years.

Reti: Wow. That was thirteen years ago.

Blumenthal: Yes. And he has done a fantastic job. We would be nowhere near as close to having TMT if it weren't for Henry and his diplomacy and his contacts. It was a brilliant choice by the president to appoint Henry, and Henry has served the system well. Now admittedly, when Henry and I get together, he always informs me that he's doing this TMT work for the Santa Cruz campus, his point being that there aren't that many astronomers at Santa Barbara, so Santa Cruz is the real beneficiary if he's successful. But he has been quite successful so far.

So they appointed Henry to do that. And then France quit. And again, at a meeting—it's really uncomfortable when these things happen at a meeting in real time—the president turned to me and suggested—oh, wait a minute, I'm not sure whether it was the president or the provost. It might have been Rory Hume, but it might have been Bob Dynes, I don't remember. But I suspect they conspired; in fact, I'm sure they conspired; they suggested that I should chair the Keck board, starting as the vice chair to replace France. This was awkward in so many ways. One was being asked in a meeting. Two, we were still in the UCSC chancellor search. People could probably guess that I was a candidate, although I was always very coy about it. I think that this actually may have happened just after I was informed that I was going to get the job, but told that we were going to wait another month and a half for the regents meeting, that it was top secret until then.

So I was completely caught off guard by this. I guess I said yes, but I pointed out how awkward it was to appoint an acting chancellor to this role. That didn't seem to bother either Rory or Bob because they knew that I wasn't going to be acting much longer. So I accepted.

Interestingly enough, after the meeting, Larry Vanderhoef and several other chancellors came over to me to congratulate me on being named chancellor at Santa Cruz. They're not stupid. They realized I wouldn't have been appointed to this if that decision hadn't—

Reti: If you were out in a couple of months.

Blumenthal: That's right.

Reti: Right. Oh. (laughs) God.

Blumenthal: And what do I say to them when they congratulate me, right? So I agreed to do it.

Now, I was worried about this because I am a theorist. I have never gone to a telescope and observed professionally. I mean, I've gone to Lick Observatory in the evening with another astronomer and my girlfriend at the time to observe through one of the telescopes there.

Reti: That must have been a long time ago. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Exactly, it was a long time ago. It was before I was married.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I did that. But that's the sum total of my observing experience. (laughter) And I was with an astronomer who knew how to operate the telescope. So that's

the limit. I'm a good physicist, but I'm not an experimentalist and I'm not an observer. So I had misgivings on those grounds. I also had misgivings because I knew relatively little about the operations of an observatory. I knew a lot about Lick Observatory just from being around. But I knew there would be a lot of things I wouldn't know. I was very worried about having agreed to do this. So I had a conversation with Mike Bolte, who by then had become the director of UCO. And Mike's reaction was, "Don't worry. The way it works is the chairship and the vice chairship flip-flop every three years between UC and Caltech."

I said, "Yeah, but I'm vice chair. I'm going to have to be chair in a couple of years."

He said, "Don't worry. Ed Stone,³⁵⁵ who's the chair of the board, he knows it all. He's been on the board since before they opened the observatory. Ed knows everything in great detail. He's one of the smartest people in the world. He will do it all. When you become chair, just let him do it all. That's what all the other UC chairs have done. They've simply deferred to Ed on everything. So that's your strategy when you become chair. Don't worry about it."

Well, I worry. Prior to that, I didn't really know Ed, except by reputation. So I had the opportunity to meet and get to know Ed. Ed did know it all. He knew amazing details. And at every meeting, he would take notes on little five by seven cards, but he'd write in such small script that he could fit twice as much as you could on a regular sheet of paper on those tiny little cards. Ed knew everything and was very detail-oriented.

So I went to my first board meeting. The first thing I learned from Ed when I was appointed was that there were going to be weekly or bi-weekly calls between the chair, the vice chair, and the director of the observatory. So it wasn't just our three times a year meetings. We would be doing these weekly calls and I was kind of expected to be on them,

which I wasn't thrilled at. I learned later that France hadn't joined those calls and the other UC people before France generally had not, either. It was usually just Ed and the director. But I thought it was my obligation. I mean, what did I know? So I joined those weekly calls.

And then we had our first meeting, which was at Caltech, of the board. I swear to you, I went to that meeting; I sat through the meeting; I read all the material beforehand. I was lost in space. I just didn't understand what was going on. Part of the reason was because everybody was speaking in acronyms and I didn't have a clue what those acronyms stood for. A lot of it was about instruments that were being developed. I mean, I know the words; I know what they mean, but I don't know details. That's okay. But I couldn't translate acronyms into something that I could get my fingers around. So I was completely lost at that meeting at Caltech. It was pathetic how little I knew. And I'm not dumb. I'm smart. I'm a physicist; I'm an astrophysicist; I know a lot about astronomy. But I sure didn't know much about Keck.

So that was my first meeting. Then after every meeting, Ed and I would go and debrief the director—the director wasn't allowed into closed sessions, so we would do a major debrief after the meetings with the director, which often put me in danger of missing my flight home. But we would do these debriefs, which were basically all Ed, because he would have these really detailed notes of everything.

Reti: Why do you think they wanted you to be the chair? I mean, clearly they knew what your strengths are.

Blumenthal: I think that previous chairs—I mean France is an observational astronomer, but before her, it was, for many years, Jud King, who is a provost and a

chemist. It was administrative experience they were looking for. It was the administrative role that they were interested in.

Reti: Okay. That makes sense to me.

Blumenthal: And in fact, soon after I came onto the board, the CFO from Riverside left. So I lobbied to have him replaced with Peter Taylor,³⁵⁶ who had been hired by UCOP to be their chief finance person, essentially CFO. Peter did it for a couple of years. And then he stepped out, and I recommended that Nathan Brostrom do it. Nathan did it for a couple of years, until he got too busy. Then he stepped out. I'm not sure who we had immediately after Nathan. But eventually I recommended Aimeé Dorr to him, and she stepped in and did it. And now, Michael Brown, the UC Provost, serves in that role.

So anyway, I saw this clock on the wall ticking toward the two-year mark, when I would have to become chair. Meanwhile, I did get to visit. I took the first of many visits to the top of the mountain to tour the observatory. Taft, the director, took me up there. I remember the first visit quite vividly, because I had no idea what to expect. It was cold. It was freezing cold up there. But fortunately, they had a down jacket for me. Here I was, in the morning I get up and go to the beach and swim. And midday, I'm up in the freezing cold where there's skiers skiing down the mountain. It's a 14,000-foot mountain. I had terrible altitude sickness. I felt fine until I got out of the car, and then I was feeling a little woozy. Then in the course of our tour, I had to climb two flights of stairs. I remember thinking, if there's one more flight of stairs, I can't do it. It was that bad. I just didn't want to faint.

But I got through it. I toured the telescope and it was very interesting. Then when the tour was over, we spent a half hour in the lounge eating some food and drinking some drinks. They want you to stay hydrated up there. When I was in the lounge, Jerry Nelson walked

in. Jerry was there because of some instruments or structural issues with Keck. He'd been there for a few days and he was wearing an oxygen tank, which roughly half of the people do. So Jerry had this oxygen tank and we sat in the lounge, chatting. Jerry and I got into an argument about something having to do with physics. At a certain point he stopped and he said, "George, just listen to yourself. You've got the physics wrong." I stopped, and I thought about it for a minute and I realized he was right. I realized this was not a mistake I'd ever make. I think the oxygen deprivation took maybe 20 to 30 points off my IQ. And he was right.

Well, the next couple of times I went up to the mountain, I used oxygen. All but one time I've been up there since then, I've used oxygen. And I'll tell you about that one time later.

So, Keck has meetings at UC, at Caltech, and in Hawaii. The clock started ticking toward that two-year mark. By that time, I wasn't as lost in space. I can't say I really understood things deeply yet, but I sure understood them a lot better than I had originally. So I was appointed the new chair of the board. And then Ed Stone quit.

Reti: (laughs) I had a feeling that was coming.

Blumenthal: I think Ed nominally quit because, first of all, he was getting older; he was already in his seventies. And secondly, he was still involved in a major research project, which actually soon became very famous. He was the chief project scientist on the Voyager mission, which had continued its voyage after all of its high-profile planet fly-bys, and was just leaving the solar system. And as it left the solar system, they discovered the interface between the interstellar medium and the solar wind, the place where the sun's influence ends and the interstellar medium takes over. There's an interface there, a shockwave, and he discovered that shockwave.

Also, he was going to be one of the board members for the TMT board and he thought that was really where his skills would be most important. I also think he probably left because I was stupid enough to participate in all those weekly phone calls, and he felt like he was leaving it in the hands of somebody who wasn't a complete UC doofus. So anyway, he left, and he was replaced by Ed Stolper,³⁵⁷ who was the vice chancellor, or vice president of physical and biological sciences at Caltech. Ed and I had a very good relationship over many years thereafter. In fact, if I didn't say it before, Caltech has over the years had some difficult characters on the Keck board; Ed Stolper was a very sensible and reasonable man. I didn't always agree with him, but you could always be assured that he would use logic in his analysis.

So I became the chair in my first incarnation as chair. I've had two three-year terms as chair so far. So I became chair, and I was determined to make some changes because, much as I love Ed Stone, I felt that the board needed to be a little less detailed and micro-managerial, and needed to be more policy-oriented and broader. I made them write up an acronym list (Reti laughs) and I tried to change, to the extent that I could, the agendas at board meetings so that they were more general, more oversightly, and a little less detailed. I also expanded the closed sessions at the end of the day, so that roughly half the day is now in closed session. But I invited the director to attend closed sessions, because I thought it was appropriate that he be there, unless we were discussing something involving him, a personnel issue.

I really was able to put in place some changes. We also started relying more on a committee structure than had been the case. For example, the audit committee really started being a real audit committee. I think those were good changes. We've never gotten as far as I would really like to go, but we're a long way away from where it was when I first came on the board, and I think that's good.

Reti: So it's striking me, as I'm sitting here, that UCSC is a public research university partnering with a very private, elite research university on Keck. That is an interesting collaboration and might lead to some culture clash. Do you think that that's the case?

Blumenthal: There is some culture clash. I'm not convinced that the culture clash isn't idiosyncratic, that there are some more interesting personalities over there than there is on our side, or maybe we more carefully culled our interesting personalities not to be on the board. `

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: I'm not sure that it's really related to public versus private, but it does seep in a little bit. For example, Caltech people are very sensitive about the fact that we are a public university, and therefore the Freedom of Information Act allows people to get to a lot of information from our side. So they've wanted to protect some of our information by locating it in Caltech, and I keep having to point out to them that that is not protection at all. As long as the UC board members have access to it, it's reachable through Freedom of Information, even if it's physically located at Caltech.

Reti: It also would strike me that the budgetary capacity of Caltech must be quite different from UC.

Blumenthal: It is. In fact, that's led to some interesting clashes. Basically, the bottom line is Caltech has been able to raise huge chunks of money, for example, 100 million dollars to build Keck, which UC simply couldn't do. On the other hand, Caltech is completely incapable of raising operating funds. In fact, this is a big issue which I'll come back to later. They're good at raising money in huge chunks, but not in small, steady pieces. That's made the partnership stronger, actually, that we have different abilities there.

One of the early Caltech members was somebody who I'd heard stories about for years—I'd never met him—Tom Tombrello.³⁵⁸ My interactions with him were quite pleasant. But I had heard some of the most amazing stories about Tom Tombrello.

The other thing that was striking at the beginning was I felt my obligation was to be supportive of the director, who was then Taft Armandroff.³⁵⁹ I liked Taft, personally. I didn't think he was a great director, but I didn't think he was terrible. But the Caltech people hated him. They were always trying to undercut him. I was always trying to support him, because I again feel like it's the role of the board to support the chief executive until you don't. That was also a problem.

But eventually, Taft left. And we replaced him with Hilton Lewis,³⁶⁰ which was an interesting story in and of itself. Hilton started out at Keck many years earlier as a computer technician and over the years, he worked himself up. When I came on the board, he was the number two person to Taft in terms of operations. He was clearly an operations person. He wasn't an astronomer as Taft was. He was an operations person and he was clearly very competent and very good. When Hilton was doing something, you knew it was being done well. Everyone had high regard for Hilton and it was clear that Hilton had pretensions of becoming the director when Taft stepped down, which I was very skeptical of, because Hilton wasn't an astronomer. He did, during the course of time—and I advised him on this as well—get an MBA degree, which I really felt would serve him well. Hilton did periodically look for positions elsewhere, hoping to improve his state in life, but he hung on until Taft left.

Then we did a search. Ed was by then chair of the board. In fact, that's kind of funny. I was a little bit unclear about the term of the chair and vice-chair. I'd been two years vice-chair, so somehow I assumed that after two years of being chair, I would again become

vice-chair. So I just went along happily on that assumption (Reti laughs) not realizing that France had been vice-chair for a year before I had come on the board.

Reti: Oh. So it's really three years.

Blumenthal: So after two years of being chair was over, I announced to the world that I was so pleased to be able to turn over the reins of power to Ed, and that I would accept my promotion from chair to vice-chair and looking forward to his reign as chair. And then I got the rude awakening that—

Reti: You're not done yet.

Blumenthal: —I ain't done yet. (laughter) But we had to recruit the replacement. So we did a full international search. We brought in a number of candidates, including Hilton. It was kind of funny. We interviewed them all in one day and the board made a decision that day. We decided to hire Hilton. Hilton was there, so Ed and I decided that we would inform him by phone and then go meet with him. So Ed called him and then we met with him. But somehow Hilton heard that he had not been hired, and we were meeting with him to try to console him, whereas Ed had meant to say that we had chosen him as the next director. So it was really kind of a little bit of a farce when we first met with him, because he had a very different view of why we were meeting than we did. I couldn't understand why he wasn't feeling more celebratory.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, how awkward.

Blumenthal: But it all got straightened out and he was very pleased. Hilton has proven to be an outstanding director. He's not an astronomer and his first act was to hire a chief scientist to serve in whatever professional roles an astronomer would do. That was very wise of him. He's led us quite well through these years. Interestingly enough, he's gotten

a lot more support from the Caltech contingent than his predecessor did. So I think that is also to the good.

Reti: All right. So today is April 25th, 2019. This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Chancellor Blumenthal for our 31st session of the oral history we're doing together. It's now spring, which it was not the last time we met, I'm sure. So we're going to continue today, George, by talking about when you were on the board of the Keck telescope, and things related to Keck and Lick.

Blumenthal: Right. So I think we've covered most of what I wanted to say about Keck, but there're a few other things I just wanted to touch on. One is, I think I mentioned my first visit to the mountain, where I met Jerry Nelson.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: But I've taken since then several other visits to the mountain. I know the next one was to bring up Michael Drake, who was then the chancellor at UC Irvine. He's now left and he's now the president of Ohio State University.³⁶¹ But Michael's a friend and he went up to see what it was all about up there, which was kind of nice. For me, it was kind of interesting: one, to bring another chancellor there; and secondly because on the way up, Michael was insistent that I give him a lecture. It's like an hour and a half drive up there. So I did an hour and a half lecture on dark matter and why there's dark matter in the universe and what it all means. I think maybe on the way back he might have asked me about multiverses or something like that, so I gave him another little lecture in the car.

Reti: Wow, how fun. You have your very own audiobook right next to you.

Blumenthal: That's right. If only I'd recorded it. At any rate, that was really nice. I think Michael enjoyed it.

I did want to tell one story about one of my visits to Hawaii. Maybe as a precursor, I should say that typically what I would do when I'd go to Hawaii for a board meeting we'd stay on the Kona coast. So we fly into Kona, stay on the Kona coast in one of the resorts there. We get a very special deal because of the Keck Observatory. Then typically I rent a car and drive up to Waimea, where the meetings are held. So it's only on rare occasions that I go to the top of the mountain. But the meetings are in Waimea, which is maybe a 40-minute drive, 45-minute drive from the beach.

I remember—I think this was the first time I went there—I was also relatively new to smart phones. I had a smart phone. And when I got here, my previous administrative assistant—I've only had two administrative assistants.

Reti: That's pretty amazing, actually.

Blumenthal: I remember I got to the hotel and I went in my room and I was on my computer trying to do some work. And my assistant Maurene called me up and she said, "Why aren't you at the beach?"

I said, "How do you know I'm not at the beach?"

She said, "Because I'm following you on your GPS."

Reti: (laughter) Oh my God.

Blumenthal: I said, "Oh my God. I've got no more freedom."

Reti: (laughs) Your leash.

Blumenthal: So she said, “Yeah. I can see you’re too far back from the beach to possibly be there.”

Reti: You were supposed to be at the beach relaxing?

Blumenthal: That’s what she was trying to encourage me to do. She didn’t succeed.

The other interesting story was one year Kelly, my wife, took a one-semester sabbatical at the University of Florida in Gainesville. So she was there for a semester and I visited her a couple of times, and she visited back a couple of times during that semester. But I went to Hawaii for a board meeting. Before I went to bed, I was watching the TV news and learned that there was an earthquake; I think it was somewhere in South America there was a big earthquake. They were predicting that there could be a tsunami emerging from that quake and if there was a tsunami, it would arrive at 10:30 the next morning in Hawaii. So I went to bed. Meanwhile, back in Florida, which is three hours later, she’s watching the news, or I think the next morning, early in the morning, and she sees “Tsunami coming to Hawaii; they’re going to evacuate the beaches—³⁶²

And she says oh, man, what the hell am I going to do? She was debating what to do. So she called Dave Kliger. Dave was then the EVC. Her reasoning was Dave had called me in the middle of the night enough times that she didn’t mind calling him once in the middle of the night. (laughter) So she called him and said, “George is in Hawaii.” He said “Yeah, I know he is in Hawaii.” She said, “There’s a tsunami coming. Do you think I should call him and wake him up?”

Reti: (laughs) She’d rather wake up Dave than you in the middle of the night.

Blumenthal: And he said, “Tsunami?” She said yeah. He said, “Well, I think maybe you ought to wake him up.” (laughter)

So she called me at like four in the morning my time in Hawaii. I was not happy with her. She said, “You’ve got to get out of there. There’s a tsunami coming.”

I said, “Yeah, I know. It’s coming at 10:30.”

She said, “They don’t keep to a schedule. This is not like a train schedule, George.”

I said, “Actually, it is, because they know when the earthquake was, and the tsunami travels at a certain speed. So we know exactly when the tsunami’s going to get here. What we don’t know is how big it’s going to be.”

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: And she said, “Wouldn’t it be a good idea to get out?”

I said, “No, I believe in the laws of physics.” I said, “I want to get up. I want to go to the gym. Have some breakfast. And then I’ll leave, well before the tsunami arrives.” She was not happy with me. (laughter) Not at all happy with me.

But in fact, the hotel did ask us all to leave early. So she wasn’t all that wrong. I did leave. I was at least in Waimea, which is really far elevated from the beach. So we all watched the tsunami arrive in Hilo. Twenty years earlier, downtown Hilo had been destroyed by a tsunami. Hilo was a particularly vulnerable place. So we all were glued to the TV to see what would happen at Hilo. We saw the tsunami come in, and it was about one-inch in size. There was barely a ripple in the harbor there.

The great irony is that that was that the only place the tsunami really did serious damage was in Santa Cruz.

Reti: Oh, that was *that* tsunami that went through the yacht harbor.

Blumenthal: It went to the yacht harbor in Santa Cruz and did considerable damage in the yacht harbor. Again, it has everything to do with the geometry of harbors, and the nature of how the land slopes up to the beach, etcetera.

Reti: That's a funny story.

Blumenthal: That was my tsunami experience.

There were a couple of issues that came up, particularly in recent years, on Keck that I think are worthy of note. Probably the most serious and potentially bad one was that the mirrors started cracking. There are sixty-four mirrors and they were starting to notice cracks in the mirrors: cracks of two kinds: radial cracks and axial cracks. Everybody was kind of alarmed. You don't want mirrors to crack. So we had to do a serious study of what was causing it. I think they fairly soon realized what the cause was. It was because the mounts for the mirrors were glued to the glass and the thermal expansion of the glue was very different than the thermal expansion properties of the glass. So there was constant stress on the glass and that stress was causing very small fissures or cracks. And that's the reason, ultimately, why the mirrors were starting to crack.

So given that they were cracking, we realized we had to fix it. So we spent a couple of years thinking about how to fix it, bringing in experts from around the world to assess our solutions. I think originally we planned to send all the mirrors to France to be fixed. Ultimately, we decided not to do that. There's a lot of danger in taking them up and down the mountain and transporting them across the ocean. We decided, at the end of the day, to do the fixing right on site, which required engineers and various technicians—it was no small matter to do that.

We also had to figure out how to pay for this, because there was no money to pay for mirror fixes. So what we ended up doing was we ended up making agreements with other

universities in other countries to provide them Keck nights in exchange for typically a hundred thousand dollars a night. We collaborated with other universities probably to the tune of several millions of dollars.

Reti: Oh. That's very creative.

Blumenthal: Well, it meant that we lost observing time for the university, for UC and for Caltech. But it was agreed that we had to do it, so we did it.

The project is—I'm guessing—two-thirds finished now. It's going very smoothly. I actually believe it's going to come in under budget. How many things come in under budget? This one looks like it's going to come in under budget and it seems to be very successful. They've fixed the cracks and we've now fixed it in a way that this should not reoccur. So it was a big success that we got this fixed. None of us would have preferred to do this, but sometimes you have these challenges and you've got to meet them. And Keck did a really good job doing that.

The other big issue that came up was that the agreement between Caltech and UC reached expiration. The first Keck telescope really started with UC. UC wanted to build it and we even got a \$36 million gift from a woman named Hoffman to build the telescope. The next day she died, so ultimately, UC got none of that money. Caltech funded it through a gift from the Keck Foundation. Caltech could have gone off and said great, nice idea, UC, thank you so much, now we're going to run with your idea. They could have done that, at least in principle. And they could have tried to hire Jerry Nelson away from us to make it work. I don't know whether Jerry would have done that. He might have, just because he would want professionally to see his baby reach fruition. I don't think Jerry would have been happy about being at Caltech, but that's neither here nor there. Caltech, however, was smart enough to realize they didn't have the technical expertise to pull this off. So

they made a deal with UC and basically the deal was they would pay for the telescope and UC would pay the operating expenses for the telescope, for essentially twenty years, or whatever length of time it would take for the cumulative UC contribution to equal the Caltech contribution. But the ownership would remain with Caltech. So that was the agreement. It was quite successful in many, many ways and it worked.

A few years after the telescope was built, the decision was made to build a second Keck telescope. We wanted to build it in the Southern Hemisphere, but Keck was an American firster, so he didn't believe in spending any of his money outside the country. So we built it nearby so the two telescopes would even be used as an interferometer.

So we built a second ten-meter telescope. That one was funded by Keck again, but with one-third of it funded by NASA, which doesn't usually fund ground-based astronomy. But they realized they needed some access to a world-class telescope to support some of their space missions, so NASA agreed to fund a third of a second telescope. So basically, NASA was, in some ways, a one-sixth partner in the Keck Observatory. They, however, are a little bit different partner in that yes, they've been giving operating expenses, but we have to actually apply for it every few years. So there's no guarantee that will continue forever. They do get a sixth of the time at the observatory and they make it competitively available to astronomers in the United States. So that's how we built the second telescope soon thereafter. The second one cost considerably less than the first one, because we'd already come to understand the technology much better.

Reti: Did the second one also have mirror problems?

Blumenthal: Yes. The mirror problems were on both. Just to put it into context, if there's 36 hexagonal mirrors in one telescope, that means there's 64 on two. And we need

spares of each type, so they need to have twelve spares. So there's seventy-six segments that need to be fixed.

Anyway, that agreement was coming to an end. And although the contract called for continuation of the arrangement with equal contribution, it was very vague. No one at the time when they set that agreement up thought about how things would continue. So it fell to the board to begin negotiations on how to make that work, and that was exceptionally difficult. At one level, this was really trivially simple, because it was clear that going forward, both universities would have to contribute equally to the operating expenses. Caltech had to comply with the terms of the gift from Keck, which was adamant that Caltech would own the telescope, which was an issue for some board members. I didn't particularly care who owned the damn thing, as long as we had access to it.

And then there were other issues like decommissioning, when the time comes that we're decommissioning the telescope. That was becoming an issue. Twenty-five years ago, no one worried about it. We just said we'd decommission it. Now there're going to be needs for guarantees, etcetera, especially when the lease is renewed. So that was another issue.

And then, fundamentally the interests of Caltech and UC are very different. UC wants every night of telescope time because we have lots of astronomers fighting for that time. And UC struggles, but not too much, in terms of paying operating expenses, but those operating expenses were being cut in half, so this was something that could easily continue, from our perspective.

From Caltech's perspective, they're very good at raising big chunks of money, like \$100 million for a telescope, but they're terrible at being able to raise money for operating expenses. So they've been panicked about that. And in fact, Caltech has been, over the last several years, selling some of their own time because they have more time than they have

astronomer needs. So they've been selling their time to other collaborators in order to build an endowment that they can use to pay for the operating expenses.

So we came to it from two different perspectives, and then started to negotiate this agreement. And oh my God, was this a long process. I'm very grateful to Aimeé Dorr, who was then the provost, because she took this on as one of her major issues. Since she's not a scientist, this was a way she could really contribute. And she really did. She was very detail-oriented. I was chair of the board at the time, so I was in some sense quote "leading" unquote this effort. But frankly, I tried to stay out of all of the arguments about commas and semicolons and stuff. I just was interested in concentrating on the big issues.

I did have some big issues that I worried about. I worried about the asymmetry in the relationship because of ownership, on the grounds that Caltech could depreciate the telescope and could use it to add to their overhead rate, and UC couldn't do that. That forced me to learn a lot more about how overhead is calculated. And I was really concerned that that was a fundamental asymmetry. It took me a long time to come to realize that it really didn't matter a whole lot. That was a big relief. I was prepared to fight a really strong battle for some compensation for that issue, until I was convinced by the UC people that it really wasn't an issue.

And there were a number of important issues, like setting up a fund, which we've done in our agreement, to fund the decommissioning of the telescopes.

Reti: So decommissioning means when the telescope gets too old to be appropriate technology for a new time?

Blumenthal: So whenever we decide not to continue that telescope, whether it be because the lease runs out and we can't get it renewed, or because we decide the technology isn't worth it, or the telescope is getting too old or whatever, we have an

obligation to decommission it, that is, to return that land to its original state. For Hawaii, that's an important issue.

Reti: Yeah, I was just thinking about the Native Hawaiians, and the controversy around that mountain.

Blumenthal: That's right. The headquarters building at Waimea—was one of my other big issues. It's officially owned by Caltech, but it's a part of the observatory. I insisted that we have language that guarantees that if we can sell that land at the end of the lifetime of the observatory, that all of the proceeds would contribute equally to our obligations for decommissioning, so we would share in those proceeds. That was agreed to.

We also set up an additional fund. We, as well as Caltech, contribute a chunk of money every year to this fund which will be set aside to pay for decommissioning costs.

Reti: So is this a common kind of concern with observatories only? We don't talk about decommissioning the University of California, Santa Cruz campus. What if we decided not to have it here anymore; how would we return the land to its original state?

Blumenthal: I don't think anyone has thought about that for the campus. I don't think most observatories think all that much about it. I think because it's Hawaii, because it's Mauna Kea, and because the passions surrounding Mauna Kea have just so grown over the last five years that suddenly it has become a huge issue. This is a matter of good faith on our part to show that we are putting aside money and we're not just saying we're going to let our descendants worry about this issue. So we put that into the agreement, and we put a bunch of other governance things into the agreement, which I won't bore you with. But it took us a year at least to negotiate this. I have to say, Caltech is not the easiest group of people to negotiate with in the world, so it was long and arduous.

I was told that this had to go to the regents for approval, so I went to the president and kept her informed about the negotiations. She seemed fine with what we were doing and what our positions were, so I was pretty confident of her support. I just assumed we would negotiate an agreement and be done. But no, we were told it had to go and be approved at the regents. So it fell to me to bring this to the regents as an item, which I did. My rule at the regents is that if you think it's going to be simple, they're going to give you a hard time. And if you think it's going to be hard, it will be trivial, easy. That has often turned out to be the case. In this case, it was true. I think I got only one question when I made my presentation and that was whether or not we were doing outreach on the island. There was almost no serious concern. Maybe it was just my eloquence in the presentation. (Reti laughs) Anyway, it worked and I was very pleased about that.

When Aimeé Dorr retired, and left the board, I encouraged the president to appoint Michael Brown as the director, and she did. So I also had the pleasure of taking Michael Brown to the top of the mountain, which was a lot of fun. I enjoyed that a lot. Michael is still on the board and I'm hoping he will stay. My intention is to stay on the board after my retirement. So I'm currently the vice chair, having been promoted from chair last year. If I stay on the board for two more years, I'll be demoted to chair again.

Reti: (laughs) Okay.

Blumenthal: So anyway, that's the Keck board.

Reti: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So let me say a few words about TMT, the thirty-meter telescope. Having successfully built two Keck telescopes, and knowing that astronomers are never satisfied, the concept developed to build a thirty-meter telescope, a telescope with three times the diameter, and therefore nine times the collecting area of Keck.

The idea from the beginning was to build it on Mauna Kea. And the idea from the beginning was to make this a UC/Caltech collaboration. It was not without its difficulties. In the early years of the TMT concept, Caltech and UC decided to undergo a divorce. We decided we couldn't work with them and they couldn't work with us. It was just so divisive a relationship. We actually abandoned the project, and what I heard was the astronomers at Caltech rebelled and basically said to the leadership there, "You've got to do this." They were just furious. So negotiations began again and the partnership was re-established.

Reti: Because astronomers at Caltech felt that this collaboration was really worthwhile for scientific reasons?

Blumenthal: I don't know that they thought about the collaboration nearly so much as they thought about the fact that if this project went away they wouldn't have access to a world-class telescope. This was all way, way before my time, but I heard a number of blow-by-blow descriptions from Joe Miller, who was then the director of UCO. (laughs) Joe and I talked a lot. And at one point, when Joe finally decided to step down as director after a long and distinguished tenure in that role, he accused me of being responsible for his decision to step down. I had been elected vice chair and then chair of the Academic Senate, so I basically disappeared from campus for two years. I used to pop in his office every now and then, and he'd unload on me all this stuff that's going on. He said, "Without you here to hear me complaining, I just couldn't stand it anymore." (laughter)

We needed somebody from UC to be the leader of the effort from our perspective. Henry Yang became chair. Since it was clear at that point that there were going to be major controversies about building another telescope on that mountain; the Hawaiian activists had gotten active—Henry started traveling to Hawaii. He literally went to Hawaii, and he went into listening mode and he listened to every group that he could possibly talk to. No

matter how opposed to the university they were, no matter how crazy their philosophy was, he went and talked to every single group. He showed patience; he showed respect. I think there was a huge, huge lesson there. He ultimately garnered their respect, because he listened to them and he respected their perspective, even if he didn't agree with it.

What that allowed Henry to do was to ultimately enlist the support of some key players in Hawaii, for example, Senator Daniel Inouye, who was a hero in Hawaii, just revered. I got to meet Senator Inouye at one of the events. But Senator Inouye only went to see Henry after he had established relationships up the tree. So it was after twenty-five trips that Inouye would do that. They established a close relationship, so close that Inouye put wording in legislation to the National Science Foundation that mandated them to do a down select for the next large telescope that they would fund. Henry really was greasing the wheels for this to get political approval. I think ultimately one of Henry's saddest days was the day that Senator Inouye died, because he lost a really good friend for this project.

At a certain point early in the project, it was realized that money was going to be an issue. We were worried because it was clear Gordon Moore was interested in this project. It was quite clear he was very interested in the project.³⁶³

Reti: Who's Gordon Moore?

Blumenthal: The founder of Intel. He lives in Hawaii. He's a big supporter of astronomy. But he's on the board of trustees for Caltech. He gave Caltech basically a billion dollars at one point. So he's a major contributor to Caltech. Henry made it his mission to persuade Gordon Moore that if he gives money to this project, which we all hoped he would, that he would split it equally between Caltech and UC. And Henry succeeded. So Gordon gave 100 million to Caltech for the project and 100 million to UC, in both cases, conditioned

on our raising matching funds of 50 million dollars. So Gordon has been key to this project going forward.

Along the way, periodically there have been questions raised about: how do we raise the additional 50 million dollars? That's been very awkward because first of all, that issue came out of the Office of the President, where in fact they don't do fundraising. So the Office of the President was kind of driving that initiative. And then it was largely picked up by some of our vice chancellors of development or university relations on the campuses, particularly UCLA and Berkeley, which is appropriate, because they have the largest fundraising operations. So there were a number of meetings that included the development people from those two campuses, plus Santa Cruz, plus Santa Barbara—Santa Barbara because of Henry, Santa Cruz because this is the hotbed of astronomy. So Jeff Shilling participated in most of those discussions and it was really helpful for me to get to hear about them. Because it was difficult to get a plan out. I think that Henry's view from the beginning was that you can't raise money for this until you know where it's going to go. And it was clear that it was going to be a difficult battle to get it on Mauna Kea. There was already discussion of the Canary Islands as being the alternative site. And he said, "Nobody's going to give money for this if they don't know where it's going." So from his perspective, this needed to be carefully done.

I think the development people, particularly those from Berkeley and Los Angeles, didn't quite understand some of the political context that they were in as well. I saw a fundraising document that they wrote and it was funny to me because they didn't even mention Henry, which I thought was a huge strategic mistake. Ultimately, nothing much happened. UC has not yet raised much money toward this particular project, some money, maybe, but not a lot. So that's an awkward issue and it will have to happen. But we need to know for sure where the project is going.

The next thing that happened was that Mark Yudof, who was by then president, decided to give the UC Medal to Gordon Moore. I think that was really wise, to do that. Gordon had been ill. In fact, it's interesting. He was extremely ill. I'm not sure what he had, but he went to Stanford Hospital. They apparently misdiagnosed or mistreated him in some way, and he was in the hospital for months. Then he went to UCSF and they found out what was wrong and they cured him. So UC can take some claim here. But anyway, when that was over, Mark decided to give the UC Medal to Gordon Moore for his support of TMT and some other things. So I went to that dinner. It was a small dinner. It was an interesting dinner because two of his sons were there with their wives. Gordon and Betty were there and a few other UC dignitaries, but it was relatively small, maybe twenty people around the table. And it was a little embarrassing because at a certain point, Gordon asked me about multiverses. So I gave a brief lecture on multiverses to the dinner table, which is not exactly what I had planned to do that evening. (Reti laughs) But it was a nice evening.

One of the things I emerged from that having learned was—I was talking to his sons and one of his sons said, you know, the gift to UC and to Caltech to build this telescope was his idea, not his father's and that he was really the force behind this. I have no reason to disbelieve that.

So that takes me to what will be a theme for the next two items, and that is our struggles with Steve Beckwith. Steve Beckwith was the vice president of research for the University of California. When he came in, he reported to Larry Pitts, and then Aimeé Dorr when Larry left. Steve had been the director of the Space Telescope Institute. He was a fairly well-known astronomer. I think it was on the basis of being a very well-known astronomer, the experience of being the director of a major center, and a lot of experience with the federal government at NASA that persuaded Dynes to originally appoint him. He

was hired and he served in that role for a number of years here at UC, and did a lot of damage during the course of that time.

Steve was not supportive of the thirty-meter telescope project for UC. In fact, he went around badmouthing it. He believed that there was huge construction risk if we agreed to do this, that we might allocate the money that's needed, but that there would be huge risks and that it wouldn't work. My reaction to that was number one, this is only a thirty-meter telescope, a Keck telescope on steroids, that's all it is. It's not new technology. Number two, they had brought in all these experts to do various studies of the design. They really had done their homework on that. So I thought it was not plausible to argue that the risks were high. There's always risks, but I didn't think they were particularly high. And second, he kept saying that to anyone who was listening. I believe Steve felt that the only future for astronomy lay in space not in ground-based observing.

The other issue had to do with operating expenses, which was an important issue. Based upon the partnership that was then being developed, the plan for UC was that we would take the 50 percent of Keck operating expenses that were no longer going to be needed for Keck and instead apply them to the TMT. And when we calculated at the end of the day what our likely percentage of the TMT was going to be (I don't remember what the number is, 20 percent, 25 percent, whatever it is), those operating expenses would exactly cover what we needed. For UC, that's great. We only had to raise some more money for the building, but the operating expenses had already been set aside. That sounded really good to me.

The Thirty-Meter Telescope Board concluded that they needed operating expenses equal to about 5 percent of the cost of the telescope, for annual operating expenses. Steve argued, both publicly and privately, that the real number was 10 percent. His basis for

arguing 10 percent was that that's what NASA uses on all of their projects. They always allocate 10 percent of their cost to the operating expenses. He would argue that that's the standard in the field. The counter argument, however, was two-fold. One was the example with Keck, where at Keck the operating expenses are 5 percent of the capital cost. So we have an example that works at that level. And the other was that there had been an external group put together to examine operating expenses, and they had concluded that this would work. So there was a real disjuncture between the official word from Keck and what people working in the field thought and what Steve thought.

Now anyone can have their opinions. I think Steve wasn't supporting this project because I don't think he believes in ground-based observing.

But in any event, things came to a bit of a head when he started making publicly recorded statements; he had meetings where the meetings were taped and the tapes were put up on the web, or the recordings, in which he said some of these things. Now at that time, we were negotiating with China and Japan and India and Canada to become partners in this enterprise. And the last thing they needed to hear was a public statement from the vice president of UC that this was a risky project whose operations would cost twice what we were estimating. Even if Steve were correct, it was inappropriate for him to put that up on the web.

I became furious. So I brought this to the Council of Chancellors. I talked about how irresponsible this was, and that the videos that were put up on the web need to be removed immediately. And they were. But the damage was done. This was horrendous, in my view. Several of the other chancellors felt just as strongly as I did about this.

Meanwhile, the telescope managed to form this partnership. The partners became Japan, India, China, and Canada, ultimately. Canada entered last. Meanwhile we were still, and

are still trying to get a partnership done with the National Science Foundation in the US. That would complete all the partners; we will have 100 percent of the telescope. So that was going on at the same time, and somewhat successfully, although it was clear that the Japanese were adamant that it had to be in Hawaii. When I was in China, I met with people from the National Academy in China. They conveyed a very clear message to me that they wanted the NSF to be a partner, and I finally came to understand why. First of all, they didn't know how to do a partnership with an entity like Caltech or UC. They do agreements with governments. And secondly, they wanted assurances that their astronomers would have access to the telescope and wouldn't have visa problems. They felt that an agreement that included an agency of the federal government would provide greater assurance to them. I can understand that.

Reti: Of course, this was under a different presidential administration.

Blumenthal: Yeah, you can imagine what it would be now. So anyway, that alliance started to be formed. Then the debate started up over whether to put this telescope in Hawaii, where there was ever-mounting opposition, or to put it in the Canary Islands, where the mountaintop there is not as good, not as high, not as smooth a flow of air as the mountaintop in Hawaii, but which is certainly okay for a telescope. The Canary Islands are also further north, so less of the sky is visible from there. But if you're going to spend a gazillion dollars to build a big telescope, you may as well put it on the best site possible. So a decision was made initially to try to put it on Mauna Kea.

And oh, man, did that become something else. I decided to go over for the groundbreaking. I'm interested in TMT, but I was wearing my Keck hat at the time. It was a big deal. They had lots of dignitaries going over for this groundbreaking. It was a complete fiasco. They put us into buses and they took us up the mountain. Of course, we

stopped halfway up because going from sea level to 14,000 feet in one fell swoop is a lot. It turns out if you just take a couple of hours to acclimate halfway up, it makes a big difference.

So we went up there in these buses to do the groundbreaking. Janet Napolitano, the president at Caltech, and Gordon Moore were all in the first bus. They got through all right. But we'd heard there might be protests. And there were protests. And they closed the road. The protestors closed the road by the time the second bus got there. I was on the second bus.

So we were basically at an impasse. The demonstrators would not unblock the road so we couldn't get up to where the groundbreaking was going to be. It was really very, very awkward, and there were all these negotiations, and people were talking and stuff. I literally had to use the restroom and there were some Porta-Potties out there. Finally, I got off the bus to use the restroom, as did Mike Bolte. We were told while we were outside that the decision had been made to send us back down the mountain, that we'd all already spent enough time on the mountain, and there were concerns of safety if you are exposed to high altitude for too long, blah, blah, blah, and therefore they were going to turn us around and take us back down. I didn't want to go back down. I wanted to go to the groundbreaking.

So Mike and I decided we were going to walk.

Reti: (laughs) God, George.

Blumenthal: It was about, around three-quarters of a mile to the top.

Reti: Oh, that's it. I was imagining like seven miles or something.

Blumenthal: Oh, no, no, no. It was just three-quarters of a mile. But it was uphill.

Reti: Uphill at 14,000 feet. This is serious.

Blumenthal: Uphill at 14,000 feet, yes. It was a bit of a challenge. The demonstrators didn't want to let us go, so one guy kept jumping in front of me. Finally, he touched me, so I started yelling that he touched me and assaulted me, so he backed off because there were police there. I wasn't going to let somebody touch me. So he backed off. Mike and I decided we were just going to walk around the demonstrators and go up to the top. So we did.

And the demonstrators were angry. Two of the demonstrators separated from the crowd and walked with us up to the top. They were hilarious. One of them was a woman. Her basic thesis was that Hawaii was not a state, that the plebiscite that was done in the fifties to establish statehood was invalid for whatever reasons, and therefore the admission of Hawaii to the union was invalid, and therefore Hawaii was not a state. So she prattled on for a while.

When she got tired of talking, the other guy, who was a native Hawaiian, started talking. He said that he's native Hawaiian; his ancestors had come to Hawaii by boats. They had navigated by the stars in order to get to Hawaii. And he said, "And that's all the astrology we need to know." So those were my two recollections of going up.

Mike and I finally got to the top. They were just breaking up then. I think it wasn't a real groundbreaking. I don't know that the appropriate prayer got said or whatever, but they were breaking up to go back down. Of course, I was concerned about making sure we got on a bus, because I didn't want to walk back down. We ended up on a bus, the same bus Janet was on. So we're driving this bus down the mountainside. We get most of the way to the bottom, and we're sort of in civilization again. Then the bus driver pulls the bus off the road into this farm and stops the bus and gets out and says, "There has to be a change

of driver here. I'm leaving. The next driver will be here in a little while." I'm thinking oh, shit, what the hell is going on? I started to get a little alarmed because the president was with us and they had just left us in the middle of nowhere. They took the bus. They just had us get out.

So I called my assistant, Margaret, because I wanted somebody to know where we were. I talked to Margaret and gave her as much as I could about our location because I didn't want us to disappear off the face of the earth. It just felt kind of fishy. But in fact, fifteen minutes later, a new bus showed up with a driver and he took us into town.

Reti: Better to be safe, though.

Blumenthal: Ultimately, we all went to a hotel on the beach and we did a ceremony at the hotel in honor of the thirty-meter telescope.

Reti: That's quite a story!

Blumenthal: Then started all the court cases. There were many lawsuits in Hawaii, which I won't go into. I wasn't particularly involved, although Henry kept me updated. Henry was very frustrated. I don't think he was so frustrated by the court cases. I think he knew that we'd be successful in court. In fact, he correctly predicted the vote on the Supreme Court for the last case. He had his finger on the pulse of what was going on there. His frustration was with our internal enemy, Caltech. What Caltech wanted to do was just go to Hawaii and do a scorched earth policy, force everyone's hand on everything. Henry's much more subtle. Henry knows that people's feelings are important and that if you're a little bit more subtle, you can get much further along the pathway you need to go. He was constantly being undercut by the folks at Caltech, and just very frustrated. But he remained on as chair of the board because I think the other countries really wanted him to stay.

Ultimately, the court cases were successful, and the final Supreme Court ruling was very much in the favor of TMT. So it's now been approved. Whether that means it will actually be built is another question. The real issue is if Hawaiian protestors come out and try to prevent trucks from coming up, or workers from getting to the top of the mountain, will the government in Hawaii step up and ensure the safety of the workers? That's really the ultimate question.

Reti: Well, is there also this 50 million dollars that has to be raised?

Blumenthal: Yeah, but that will happen one way or another. Henry's view has always been that if we're successful, Gordon will just give us the 50. All he's got to do is root around in his couch for a little while. (Reti laughs) So that's pretty much the thirty-meter telescope. It's slated to go into Hawaii if the protestors don't stop it. No final decision has been made, but they're ready to go. I think it's ready and hopefully it will be a success.

A Crisis at University of California Observatory/Lick

Okay, so I think we should move on to discuss UCO/Lick. UCO stands for University of California Observatories. Lick, of course, stands for the observatory outside San Jose and Mount Hamilton. But the idea of UCO is to be more all-encompassing of the astronomical efforts within the UC system. Now ever since I arrived, UC Santa Cruz was the home of Lick Observatory. Once UCO was formed, UCSC was the leading institution for UCO. It led to an interesting situation because the faculty that were UCO-affiliated faculty, or previously Lick faculty, were faculty that were funded 80 percent by Lick Observatory or UCO, and 20 percent by the campus. And that was true of basically all of the observational faculty and one of the theorists, Peter Bodenheimer, who had been hired, I think, before the observatory moved to Santa Cruz. As I think as I mentioned earlier, it was later after

the observers moved to Santa Cruz with Peter that the decision was made to hire a bunch more theorists.

I'm pretty sure I talked about some of this [earlier in the oral history], but I'm not sure I talked about this part of it. So when the campus was opened, the agreement was made that the astronomers at Lick Observatory would all come to UC Santa Cruz. They would become faculty members at UC Santa Cruz, and they would be funded on eleven-month appointments, as 80 percent Lick and 20 percent UCSC. And it made sense. It made sense to do an eleven-month appointment because the observatory operated 12 months a year, so it had to be a full-year appointment. Secondly, the astronomers were responsible for keeping that observatory running, to make sure that the instruments worked, to develop new instruments for the telescopes, etcetera. These weren't small matters.

So all of the astronomers came to Santa Cruz. And they were all observers, except for Peter Bodenheimer, who had been hired as a theorist, because they felt they needed a theorist, even when they were on the mountain. Once they were at Santa Cruz, particularly Bob Kraft, who was at that time I think acting director of the observatory, realized that concentrating solely on instrumentation and observing was not the pathway to having a great observatory. It really needed to have some theorists around as well. So Bob brought in a guy to write a grant proposal. The guy he brought in was Ron Saufley. Ron and he wrote this big grant proposal to the National Science Foundation to hire five theoretical faculty members in astrophysics. It got funded. The deal was, the NSF gave a certain number of years of salary for those faculty members, but with the agreement by the university that the university would pick up those appointments once the NSF grant ran out.

Reti: Saufley had a background in science?

Blumenthal: I don't think so. But he was a great writer, and he wrote grants.

Reti: I know he was involved in the Oakes science program, of course.

Blumenthal: Yes. But he was really the grant writer for Oakes College, and ultimately the chief of staff to Herman Blake. But no, he got started just writing grants.

Reti: This one person had a huge impact on this place.

Blumenthal: Exactly. I kid him about it mercilessly when I see him, to point out to him that he could have changed the course of history if he simply hadn't written that grant so well.

Reti: True.

Blumenthal: Anyway, they got the grant and they started hiring theorists. The first one they hired was John Faulkner. The second one they hired was Bill Mathews, who they took from UC San Diego. The third one they hired was Jeff Scargle. Jeff came from Caltech. The fourth one they hired was Doug Keeley, who came from Caltech. Then somehow in the middle of all this, they gathered together a little bit of extra money somewhere and they hired someone to be 50 percent in astronomy and 50 percent in physics. That was Bill Burke, who did general relativity. The last of the five hires was me.

Soon after I was hired, the grant ran out. But the positions were all picked up by the university, which was a fairly safe bet, because this was a growing university, so there would be positions available. My understanding is that not every university that got these grants actually fulfilled that commitment. But UCSC did. So that was good.

So we had a department that had like six or seven, six and a half theorists. Neither Doug nor Jeff got tenure, so they were replaced by Doug Lin and Stan Woosley, both of whom

have become enormously successful. But we also had something like twelve observers, maybe more. Thirteen, maybe? I don't remember the exact number anymore. So a lot of observers and six and a half theoretical faculty. That was a huge advantage. For a budget for the campus, that's far less than the cost of that number of faculty. We got the benefits of having these additional faculty on campus. We got the advantage of the overhead on their grants. And at the departmental level, frankly, those of us who were theorists got the benefits of the fact that the department was much larger than we deserved to be based upon the number of campus FTEs that were being committed to the department.

So the result was that those of us who were theorists actually taught less than we would otherwise have taught had we been in another department without the benefit of Lick Observatory. So I want to acknowledge that Lick did provide a real benefit to the campus and to the other department members. But having said that, the campus made some commitments as well. The campus took on Lick Observatory as part of our inventory of space. We took on the obligations to keep it up and to provide police services and to maintain the road, etcetera. That was a significant contribution of the campus to Lick Observatory. And you know—oh and I forgot to mention as a footnote—one of the Lick faculty, Harland Epps, was 100 percent Lick and 0 percent department.

So anyway, that was a situation that had gone on for many, many decades at UCSC. It was definitely a benefit to the campus, but frankly, there were benefits to the system as well from this model. It was strained in a couple of regards, the most important of which was there was some jealousy on other campuses that Santa Cruz was getting the best of the deal here because of the 80/20 appointments. There were a lot of faculty in the UC system who would have loved to have an 80/20 appointment. So even though the Lick people taught, on average, more than 20 percent of a faculty member, it still was a whole lot less than 100 percent of a faculty member. So there was a lot of jealousy and envy from the

other campuses. To some extent, leaders like Joe Miller and Mike Bolte when they became directors of the observatory tried to mitigate that by giving grants to other campuses to develop instruments and to develop laboratories, and to pay summer salary for faculty members on the campus. So they really did try to mitigate some of that feeling that Santa Cruz was getting this good deal. But there was an element of it that was there. I just have to acknowledge that.

And then arrives Steve Beckwith. Steve Beckwith came in and was concerned, and frankly, legitimately so, about the number of multi-campus research units within the university. Again, let me back up for a minute and explain. Since time immemorial, the university had organized research units. An example would be SCIPP, for example, the Santa Cruz Institute of Particle Physics. [As I mentioned earlier in this oral history] there was a time when the money for organized research units came from the president's office and the approval had to come from the president's office to establish them. So they were, in a sense, governed from the Office of the President. At a certain point in our history, somewhere in the 1980s, plus or minus ten years, a change happened and all organized research units were devolved to the campuses, along with their funding, I might add, so that SCIPP or whatever unit like that would now get its funding from the campus, but the campus did get some funding as a part of their budget from UCOP. That was actually a disadvantage for Santa Cruz, because Santa Cruz had far fewer organized research units than most of the other campuses, so that little augmentation to the campus budgets really didn't benefit us nearly as much as it benefited, say, Berkeley, with their Space Sciences Lab, for example. On the other hand, UCSC did get the benefit of Lick Observatory, or UCO, which was a special case.

Anyway, with the fact that once ORUs, organized research units, became campus-based, what remained were multi-campus research units, research units that involved more than

one campus. An example of that would be Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics. Another example would be UCO. So there were these multi-campus programs, and there was a lot of pushback on them because IGPP, for example, or some of the other programs, seemed to have money since time immemorial from the system. Yes, there was oversight. They would do five-year reviews or fifteen-year reviews. But there was no more money to establish new multi-campus research units. And it was a perfectly legitimate question to ask, “Why do we allow those to just continue to exist? Why shouldn’t they be re-competed? If you’re going to have ten multi-campus research programs, why not make it be the best ten, rather than the ten who were established twenty years ago?” A perfectly legitimate question, and Beckwith was asking that question. I don’t know that he was unique to it, but that question was being asked by the Academic Senate at the time as well. But it was a legitimate question, and I have no objection to it.

And in fact, what Beckwith established was the re-competition of all the multi-campus research units into something that was called the MRI program. So they re-competed lots of stuff, including IGPP, which had been a huge thing. But some of us argued—and I was one of them who argued very, very strongly—that UCO Lick could not and should not be re-competed in the same way as another program because UCO Lick was unique in that it was associated with two facilities—a facility at Lick Observatory and a facility at Keck Observatory—and that in addition, UCO Lick had the shops at the Santa Cruz campus. And just putting it up willy-nilly for re-competition made absolutely no sense, especially since the Lick faculty had tenure on the Santa Cruz campus. So that was my argument. I was initially successful in keeping UCO Lick out of this competition.

But then Beckwith argued, maybe with some justification, that there should at least be a stewardship review of the programs that exist. Again, I don’t think that was an unreasonable thing. So he set up a huge mechanism to do stewardship reviews of all of

the systemwide programs, including UCO. And at the end of the day, the review of UCO was quite positive. So I wasn't really unhappy with the existence of the stewardship program.

But it was soon becoming clear that Beckwith's ultimate goal was to disassemble UCO and that he did not like the idea, as a matter of principle, that there would be faculty on campuses paid for with systemwide funds. I, of course, had arguments with him. I had arguments with Larry Pitts; I had arguments with Mark Yudof; and I had arguments with Aimeé Dorr on this very issue. My argument was basically that this might be a good thing in general to do, but with any general rule, there might very well be justifiable exceptions. I argued that the kind of instrumentation work and the kind of forethought that you need to develop new and innovative instrumentation does require a commitment of faculty that is an institutional commitment, rather than a personal commitment to their own research. The fact that I lost that battle tells you how far that argument went. (chuckles) Beckwith really was coming down on UCO Lick.

Then it got worse because it soon became apparent that there were budget issues at UCO/Lick. There was a question about whether UCO/Lick was consistently overspending its budget. Many years earlier, a decision was made by UCOP that all Lick Observatory or UCO budget matters would be dealt with separately from the campus. So as a systemwide MRU, they had their own budget office; they did their own budgeting; and they interacted with the UCOP budget office directly. Their stuff did not go through the campus Planning and Budget office. That was actually at the direction of UCOP originally. But of course I kept hearing, "Oh my God, you guys are really incompetent on your campus because you didn't keep control of the UCO budget." Well, we didn't even get the budget.

So that became a really difficult and active point of contention and led to a meeting at Santa Cruz at University House where Larry Pitts came down with Steve Beckwith and Nathan Brostrom and a few others to talk to us about the budget for UCO and Lick. Of course, Peggy [Delaney] was there, and I was there, and Alison Galloway was there. We wanted to make the point that we, as a campus, didn't have this responsibility since we had no control over the budget. I'm never sure that that ever got through completely.

The issue revolved, as I came to understand from Mike Bolte, around mandatory increases in salaries and benefits. Basically, for years UCO had received an increment in the budget every year to pay for increases in salaries and increases in benefit costs. A few years earlier it had stopped and they had budgeted based on the expectation that that money would come through in arrears. I think they did not appreciate that the ground rules at the university had changed. I knew that. We knew that. But since they didn't talk to us about the budget, that never got through to them, and they ended up with a fairly significant budget deficit. Then things got messed up with issues of budget clarity, because the folks at UCOP kept saying they don't have clarity on the budget and they kept looking at us. And we're saying, "This isn't our problem, you should have been getting that clarity yourself." And they kept looking at Peggy. So Peggy finally took it on, and Peggy was the one who kind of worked through everything and ultimately came to some level of clarity about what was and wasn't in the budget. But we just kept hearing from UCOP, "Well, you don't have budget clarity," even after we did.

I'll give one example. Somehow there was a perception by Steve and, to some extent, by Larry, although Larry was educable on this, that the grants that came, like the instrumentation grants that UCO faculty got, they felt that those grants should pay for operation expenses for the observatory. But of course, that's not true. If you go to NSF and you say, "I want a grant to build an instrument," you basically have to build the

instrument, not run the observatory. There may be overhead that could be put toward operations. But in fact, they get so little of their overhead back, that's not a major contributor. So that was another point of contention.

So all of this is going on, with lots of sturm and drang. And Mike Bolte finally has enough and resigns. I don't know if you know Mike Bolte, but Mike is an intrinsically reasonable man. He can talk to almost anyone. He can talk without getting emotionally enraged about anything. He's a reasonable person and he tries to use sensible arguments rather than bombast to make his points. I think he served the observatory exceptionally well as director, at some personal expense. I think his own research career took a hit because of the amount of time he spent as director. But he had enough. At this point he said screw it, I don't want to do this anymore. So he resigned.

Let me stop for a minute and explain that the reporting relationship of the director of UCO has been somewhat variable over the years. For years, the appointment was made by the president or the provost of the university. It was clearly an Office of the President thing to appoint the director. When Bob Kraft stepped down as director and Joe Miller was the associate director, he became the acting director by default. Joe became the acting director while he was associate director; he was also one of the finalists for the directorship. That dragged on and on and on as a search. I had been on sabbatical at Harvard, and when I came back to campus, it was still dragging on. I was shocked to discover Joe was in the director's office. In fact, I used to kid him that he wasn't the acting director, he was acting as director. He was getting madder and madder, because he was a finalist and he wasn't hearing anything. Finally, he said he wasn't going to continue serving as acting director.

So Bob Kraft and I went to visit the chancellor but this was just after Robert Stevens had resigned and left campus. So the acting chancellor, for at least a brief period of time, was Michael Tanner, who heard us out and induced the Office of the President to make a decision. So we got some clarity. We got some stuff to happen. And ultimately, Joe was appointed. So we averted disaster.

When Joe stepped down as director, that was just around the time I was becoming acting chancellor. A decision had been made during Denice's term as chancellor that the directorship of UCO Lick would report to the chancellor at Santa Cruz. So officially Denice was in charge of the search for that director. I think the Office of the President just wanted to offload it onto the campuses. So that search was ongoing, or nearly finished when I became the acting chancellor. So the decision ultimately rested with me. I thought it was a slam dunk that it should be Mike Bolte. But I really had been uncomfortable with making the chancellor of Santa Cruz the person responsible for the director when the policy had been put in place. I felt that discomfort long before I knew I was going to be the acting chancellor. This was when Denice was chancellor and she was in this office. When I heard that change was being made, I remember at the time saying, "This was very unwise."

Reti: Why?

Blumenthal: Because ultimately, it's UCOP that's paying for UCO. and to have a director that doesn't report to them just struck me as unstable. But they wanted to do it, and Denice wanted it, so they moved it over.

So I was the one who finished that appointment, but I made sure that I worked hand-in-hand with Rory Hume, who was then provost of the university. Rory and I put together a package to induce Mike to accept the position. I think we put together a million dollar a

year augmentation to his budget, with the agreement that half of that would come from UCOP and the other half would come as an additional assessment to the campuses proportional to the amount of observing time they used. Everyone agreed to that. I took it to the other chancellors, they all agreed. So we did it. So I was the one who finished the Bolte appointment.

So when Bolte quit, it was on my shoulders to find his replacement. The first thing I needed to do, because Bolte was leaving quickly, was to find an acting director. So I talked to a bunch of faculty at UCO. I took a sampling of faculty opinions on the other campuses. I made a bunch of phone calls to astronomers and I ultimately made the decision to appoint Sandy Faber as the acting director. So Sandy took over as the acting director but that didn't end the kerfuffle regarding the future of UCO Lick. It may have, in fact, added to the kerfuffle.

I was very concerned for some time about how UCOP managed and reviewed their own senior personnel. But unfortunately, UCOP, in general, had a complete and utter lack of transparency on the issue of senior management reviews at UCOP. On our campus, we're quite transparent. We let everyone know when someone's being reviewed. We ask everyone conceivable for an opinion. If the dean is being reviewed—we ask all the faculty in the division. We ask the other deans. We ask deans from other campuses. We go through a standard kind of stuff. But at UCOP, they didn't have any real policy, it seemed to me, and they didn't have any real practice. It looked to me like they weren't even doing these damn reviews. I was determined to make some change up there.

UCOP had a group that had been meeting for many, many years. I think it was mostly chancellors, but it included a few other senior managers in the system. It was a group that reviewed all salary actions on senior managers. I think it was called SMAC. Yeah, in fact,

I'm sure it was called SMAC. Every salary review that anyone got in senior management—and senior management used to include all the deans and vice provosts as well—on any of the campuses had to go through SMAC. They met at least monthly. They always met before the Council of Chancellors for a couple of hours, so that the chancellors in the group would be there to participate. I never served on SMAC. One year I was called and told that the president wanted me to serve on SMAC. I basically said no. I don't know what excuse I used, but I really, really, really didn't want to be on that group because I didn't want to be the guy that says no all the time. And furthermore, certainly in those days, I was by far the most penurious chancellor, so I didn't think it was fair to the other campuses to put me on it, because my gut reaction was always to be penurious. So I really didn't want to do it. So I said no, and I waited, quaking in my boots that Yudof would order me to do it. But he never did. He put somebody else on instead. Thank God.

That group had been meeting for years and at a certain point, they transitioned it. They transitioned it twice. First, they transitioned it to all of the chancellors, and only the chancellors meeting, but not necessarily approving everything, just going over issues that were coming up about the compensation for senior management. Later on, they changed it so it was only the healthcare chancellors who had to meet. So that's what it is still today when they meet.

But during this intermediate period where all of the chancellors had to meet to talk about this stuff, there were a bunch of issues we had to talk about with regard to salaries. There was always an agenda. Dwayne Duckett came in and gave us an agenda and led the meetings.

So at one of the meetings, I said, "We need to agendize for the next meeting a discussion of senior management reviews." The next meeting came, and it wasn't on the agenda.

Dwayne told me there wasn't time, and so we were going to have to put it off. I said fine, as long as it gets discussed. So we had our meeting.

The next month came, and it still wasn't on the agenda. I got really angry. I basically told Dwayne that he had to do this, that I was going to ask all of the chancellors to insist that this be part of the meeting. He agreed. So we had a discussion of senior management reviews, which was very frustrating because they argued that they were already doing them and doing them right. But, in fact, what they were doing was they were just having whoever the supervisor of that person was write to a few people and say, "What do you think of so and so?" And then they'd get the results back, and then do any coaching or whatever needed to be done to correct flaws and then move on. Whereas a senior management review on a campus is a big deal. We get letters from, as I said, letters from everybody. We do a serious review of that person's performance.

I was really upset at that meeting. And Nathan, who I usually respect, Nathan said, "You know, I do these all the time and it works fine." He mentioned two of the reviews that he did, one of Debbie Obley and the other of Patrick Lenz. He said, "I just finished both of their reviews, and it was a really helpful review."

I said, "Nathan, I've known Debbie Obley for ten years. I've known Patrick Lenz for nine years. I've worked closely with both of them, but you never thought to ask me what I think. I might have something to contribute to that discussion. So by limiting yourself and not including the campuses and the interactions with the campuses as a part of this discussion, you're actually getting a very skewed version of what the opinion is. Now I happen to think very highly of both Debbie and Patrick. I wouldn't have given you any negative comments and may not have changed your perspective, but you have no way of knowing that unless you ask me." He got the point. He agreed that that was a fair point.

But, of course, my ultimate target was Academic Affairs. So in the discussions that went on, it was clear they were really reluctant to change their process, or to change the way that they solicit views. I got them to agree to a modification. The modification I got them to agree to was when they solicited opinions, they would always solicit opinions from the ten chancellors for any senior manager at UCOP, and that any or all of the ten chancellors were free to solicit additional opinions from members of their own constituencies.

Reti: Okay. That's pretty good.

Blumenthal: Simultaneously with all this going on, the decision was being made to eliminate the 80 percent support for the faculty at UCO. For a small campus like ours, that was a huge, huge potential loss, devastating, I would go so far as to say. I had some very awkward conversations with both Aimeé Dorr and with Mark Yudof. I struck the best deal I could get, which was still a very unsatisfactory deal, that they would put aside, I think it was, I can't remember, six or eight million dollars into a fund that we could use to pay the 80 percent of faculty until they retire.

Reti: Right, because you've got tenured faculty people and you can't transfer them to geology or some other department.

Blumenthal: Right. The existing faculty would continue in their eleven-month appointment. They would be paid for by the campus, but they would reimburse us for the 80 percent from that fund that they had established. That was not fine with me for two reasons. One reason is it meant that when all these people retired, then it's over. To me, that was the bigger issue. The second issue was that we didn't have the money to pay the 80 percent of all those faculty and that's why I negotiated this fund. I got some agreement from them and then I insisted it be higher. I believe I got every red cent I could out of Yudof for this one. But it was clear I wasn't going to get any more. So that was over.

Since it wasn't my decision to keep paying the 80 percent, and since they were determined not to do it, this was difficult. It was also difficult for me because the astronomers here were really mad. I was one of the objects of their anger. I remember having lunch with Bill Mathews, and he was saying, "Why did you do this?!" Well, in fact none of this was me. I was fighting against it tooth and nail, doing everything I possibly could to make this not happen. I was the one with my finger in the dike, but floods were coming. It had nothing to do with me. I was the opponent of this action. You could argue that I was insufficiently convincing, or didn't use the politics right, etcetera. You can make those arguments, although frankly I believe that I'm as good as anyone around there at playing university politics at a systemwide level. I don't think there was another game to be played. But you could at least argue that. But to argue that I was complicit in this action, was simply not true. In fairness to the astronomers, once people started hearing the story, they understood.

Peggy did some calculations, so we knew immediately that the amount of money that they had put aside, even after I'd successfully argued for an increase, was going to be insufficient to cover all of our faculty until they retire. I think that is true. We've now spent it all. So for younger faculty, like Conny Rockosi for example, their money is coming out of the campus.

But it also made us face a much more serious challenge, which is how are we going to remain the home of UCO? Do we want to maintain a significant instrumentation program at Santa Cruz, and is the campus willing to make the kind of investment that we would need to make in order to make that happen? Those are hard questions. And it's even harder for me because you could argue I'm not a fair and objective player in this game.

The good news is that the campus will remain a major player in the instrumentation game. Although I kind of stepped out in terms of the details. Paul Koch in PB Sci³⁶⁴ and Alison Galloway really forged the plan to move forward. We made a commitment to keep a significant number of instrumentation faculty. We agreed to create a number of faculty positions as the UCO folks retired, even though we're paying for them entirely. We agreed to do this. We even agreed—I think this one I agreed to—to hire a TMT instrumentalist who wasn't a faculty member, although I think this person has now been put on the faculty, but I agreed to pay one-time money to hire someone to put in a proposal to build one of the TMT instruments because otherwise Santa Cruz might have been out of that game.

So we basically lost the major benefits that we had from hosting UCO. We still have responsibilities toward the Lick facilities.

Reti: So we lost the money, but UCOP did not take on maintaining the road and fire safety and—

Blumenthal: We got them to maintain a shared arrangement for doing that, so it isn't entirely us anymore. But in terms of the equities, I think that we did not get a good deal out of this. On the other hand, I could have said, "Okay you guys at UCOP, you're not going to fund us, we're washing our hands of UCO, of Lick. They're yours. Go do whatever you want." We could have done that. And I didn't want to do that because number one, Lick is close to Santa Cruz and we derive benefit to teaching and research from that proximity. Number two, UCO, the shops, the ability to develop instrumentation, etcetera, has been a real advantage for the campus. If that were moved to somewhere else, I think it would be a major loss for Santa Cruz. And third, to be honest with you, no other campus wanted it.

Reti: This is an important question for the future, for future chancellors who may be dealing with this question of sponsoring and why we would want to continue this relationship with Lick. I'm glad we're covering this.

Blumenthal: Well, we have a history of excellence, and a history of major contributions and the ability to carry it out. I think proximity to Silicon Valley helps. The existence of the Lick shops, even though they're old and grungy, still is a big advantage. I think for the campus this is a good thing. It's a good thing for the campus to have some programs that are truly *the* outstanding programs in the world. I think it was an important decision to make that kind of commitment. So we are committing a lot more resources to astronomy than we would have done had this not happened. On the other hand, we're not committing as much as they would have gotten had we kept to the old arrangement.

Reti: How is it that we've been able to afford to keep that commitment? I know this has been an era of diminishing resources.

Blumenthal: Well, the good news is that most of this happened after the crash of 2008. The campus was getting rebenching money, and we were getting growth money, and a little bit of budget recovery money. So there was some money floating around, and there were some FTEs floating around that we could do some things with.

Reti: Great. Okay.

Blumenthal: So the next major controversy on this came out of the Office of the Provost from Steve Beckwith: "Gee, folks, why don't we close Lick Observatory?" The argument was, "Well, we maintain this facility. The biggest telescope there is a mere 120 inches. When it was built, 120 inches may have been the second biggest in the world, but it's not at the same level of world-class telescope that it was forty years ago. So why not just close

the damn thing and save us all these operating expenses etcetera, and all the risk associated with it?”

Reti: Right. And people point out that it’s close to San Jose and the lights of the city are interfering with observing to some extent, right?

Blumenthal: So it’s interesting you mention lights. Lights have always been an issue at observatories. The story there is quite interesting, although it didn’t involve me. But early on, when I was still an assistant professor, it was clear that lights were becoming an increasing issue. One of the ways that we mitigated lights at the 120-inch was that Joe Wampler, a faculty member here, developed something called the Image Dissector Scanner, which allowed us to take scans of the spectra of distant objects like quasars or stars or galaxies. When you scan over frequencies, the streetlights only emitted certain frequencies. So as long as you stay away from those particular frequencies and all you’re doing is taking spectra, the 120-inch was still the best in the world, particularly since Wampler was way ahead of everybody else in terms of developing this technology.

Then the replacement technology, which was CCD technology—we were among the first to install that as well. So technologically, Lick stayed way ahead of the game by doing spectra of objects rather than taking images. If you take images of a galaxy, that’s not going to be so good because of the background light. But spectra, which avoids frequencies where the lights are, is a really good way to go.

However, in the 1970s, San Jose debated the question of whether or not they should put in high-pressure or low-pressure sodium lights. The argument was that high-pressure sodium lights would lead to less yellow lighting, so it would be more white light. And high-pressure sodium lights would be, I believe, cheaper to operate in terms of electricity, although the initial costs would be higher.

San Jose was very close to adopting high-pressure sodium lights as their standard. Lick became aware of that, so they assigned Sandy Faber to the task of convincing San Jose to go with low-pressure sodium lights. The difference is that with low-pressure sodium lights, virtually all of the energy comes out in two wavelengths of sodium. That's why the light is so yellow. But high-pressure sodium lights have a gazillion wavelengths that they come out at. That's why it's white. They would completely pollute the spectrum and it would be impossible to do spectra at Lick Observatory anymore.

So Sandy started this quest to convince San Jose. It was really fascinating. She had an in because her husband is a lawyer in San Jose and he works with the city government, so he had good contacts. But Sandy was a young woman and it was funny to watch this from afar because she would go into meetings with engineers and they would just regard her as some stupid outsider who didn't know anything. But Sandy is smarter than 99.9 percent of the people in the room, by far. Sandy has this knack of digging in and asking questions, and finally driving people to the point where they have to start stammering because they realize they don't understand it as well as they thought they did. It was a long battle for Sandy, but she ultimately prevailed. I think she prevailed because she's so damn smart. So San Jose decided to put in low-pressure sodium lights and that's why the streetlights in San Jose are so yellow.

Reti: Oh. Very cool.

Blumenthal: So I'm not sure where I was.

Reti: I was bringing up the question of whether light pollution was a factor in trying to argue that the Lick Observatory had outlived its time, essentially.

Blumenthal: So the answer is no, it was not a factor.

So the argument was it's a significant facility and it costs a lot of money. Why should observatories live forever? When an observatory's lifetime is over, do euthanasia and put it out of its misery. Nothing should live forever. Otherwise, you'll support more and more facilities. That's not a terrible argument.

But there are other counter-arguments. First of all, the 120-inch was still a useful telescope and used extensively to develop technology to put on Keck. So for example, all of the adaptive optics instrumentation was developed that's used on Keck, which was way ahead of its time on adaptive optics. It was all developed on 120-inch. Furthermore, we had recently built a couple of other telescopes there that were important. One is called the APF, the Automated Planet Finder. What that does is it finds planets automatically, so you don't even have to be there to observe. At this point in time in our history, that's important. So that was an important instrument. And there was another one, I forget its name, but it's basically a supernova finder because for those people who are trying to measure dark energy in the universe, you measure dark energy by measuring distances to very distant galaxies. You measure those distances by using supernovae, which you have to find. These are explosions of stars. So you have to monitor the sky a lot to see those supernovae. There's another automated telescope out there that does that. That's yet another example of something that's going on at Lick.

Furthermore, there's a huge public and teaching benefit to Lick. We take all of our elementary astronomy classes up to Lick Observatory. I think Berkeley may do the same. And for graduate students, it's a great place to get practical experience observing because graduate students aren't going to get a lot of time on Keck. So it's useful in that regard. Then finally, there's a historical issue as well. The main building is of great historical interest. The 36-inch telescope was the original Lick telescope, then the largest telescope in the world. James Lick is buried under the telescope. So there's great historic interest.

A group was formed, Friends of Lick Observatory. It became one of our campus Friends groups. I think there were also efforts made at Berkeley and at other campuses to preserve Lick Observatory through fundraising and lobbying. So it became a big issue. The Friends of Lick Observatory were not dumb. They realized that one way to get this thing preserved would be to enlist our political friends to do that. So they wrote to several congress people from the area, including Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, and Mike Honda.³⁶⁵ There were letters from the congressional representatives to Janet saying what the hell is going on with Lick Observatory? Janet wrote back a letter to them explaining why this might be a good thing to do to close down Lick Observatory, giving them lots of facts and figures about Lick Observatory. The letter was horrible. It was full of lies and mistruths and misstatements. It was the kind of thing you might expect from Donald Trump. It was really bad.

Sandy Faber, who was then the acting director of Lick Observatory, wrote a letter to Janet. I love Sandy's letter. It was a long, long letter, pointing out line-by-line why Janet's letter to the congress people was untrue. Basically, she said to her, "Look, this is why your letter is so wrong. If you will send a second letter to these congress people, I will back off. But if you don't do that, I will send my letter to the congress people." Sandy takes no prisoners.

She heard nothing back from Janet. So she sent her letter to the congress people. So what came back was a second letter from the congress people basically explaining why they found Janet's first letter to be unacceptable and asking her to send them another letter, but this one being truthful. (laughs) It was kind of amazing.

So just around that time, this was really funny, we had a UCSC Foundation board meeting. The foundation board had established a Lick Observatory subcommittee. They gave a report on what their activities were, because they wanted to lobby to preserve Lick. Then

they asked me to comment on what was going on. I told them the story of the letter and of Sandy's response and of the congress people's response back to Janet.

I started going off on this. I got more and more animated. I said, "Can you imagine this? Can you imagine a situation where a chief executive writes a letter and gets something like that back? You know, many of us write letters and they're written by our underlings, by our principal officers, and we have an expectation that they're not going to embarrass the hell out of us." So I got more and more animated, and I was going on, "You guys all know me, I'm a very easygoing person. I don't get upset easily. Very level-headed. If somebody did that to me, what they did to Janet, that person would be fired so fast." I don't know what analogy I used. But I said they'd be fired immediately, there was no way I could tolerate that kind of thing. I'm going on and on. I was ranting.

It was really funny, because when I finally finished my little rant, Garry Spire, who's been a foundation board member since before I became chancellor, he piped up and he said, "I like this. I like pissed-off George. I've never met pissed-off George before, but I like him." (laughter)

So anyway, the upshot was that soon after Janet got the second letter from the congress people, two things happened. One was, there was a second letter from Janet, which was much more sensible and reasonable and truthful.

So the next thing that happened was Sandy's year appointment was coming to an end. So Aimeé Dorr was starting to initiate some changes in policy to take back the appointment authority from the chancellor at Santa Cruz to the provost, which left me in a bit of a quandary, because right after I appointed Sandy for the first year, I started a process of appointing a search committee for a new permanent director. I talked to a bunch of people about who should be on the search committee and what the political pitfalls were. I

identified Tomas Treu³⁶⁶ from Santa Barbara—he's since moved to UCLA—as the person to chair the committee. I asked him and he agreed. So I was very pleased that I had a chair. Tomas and I had some conversations about who should be on the committee. I felt that we were well on our way toward getting the search process going for the new director.

But then I heard from Aimeé Dorr that she was going to change the policy so that it was no longer the chancellor at Santa Cruz who chose the director of Lick Observatory. I was unwilling to try to race the clock to get this done. I don't think she wanted me to, but irrespective, I didn't think that that was an appropriate thing to do, and I felt like to do that would also put me on low moral grounds. Because as a matter of fundamental principle, I think the appointment should come from the provost. So I was okay with basically stopping the search. Maybe not okay—I think we should have found a way to move it forward with collaboration between the provost and the chancellor, since the policy was changing—but in any event, I didn't fundamentally object. I didn't rise up on my high horse and object to this.

On the other hand, Sandy's year as acting director was coming to an end. Aimeé Dorr met with me and basically said that it was still my reappointment to make because the policy had not yet been changed. But she basically said to me that as far as she was concerned, I needed to appoint anyone but Sandy Faber. I was not happy with that.

Reti: And that was because of the political situation?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Sandy does not easily take no for an answer. She will find twenty ways to come back to you. She's pushy. I think that's one of her strengths. She's also damn smart. But Aimeé Dorr really didn't want me to do that. So I was kind of unsure how to proceed. I decided the only thing I could do was start to talk to astronomers. So I got on the phone again and I started calling astronomers, both at Santa Cruz and the other

campuses, to explore who might be an appropriate candidate for the acting directorship for the next year. The result of all of those conversations were that there were only two people whose names came up consistently as being acceptable. One was Sandy Faber and the other was Claire Max.

So I talked to Claire. It was clear that Claire really didn't want to do this at that point in time. She really wanted to be out of that consideration. So I talked again with Aimeé Dorr. I told Aimeé Dorr that I intended to appoint Sandy, that I had done my due diligence and I had done my homework, and I'd acknowledged her objections to Sandy. But I said I felt like I had to do something consistent with the wishes of the astronomers within the UC system. I also felt personally that it was the responsible thing to do, even though I'm prepared to acknowledge that you don't think it's the responsible thing to do. She wasn't happy, but in fairness to Aimeé Dorr, she was okay.

But then I felt a moral obligation to let Sandy know what she was getting into. I had a meeting with Sandy. I think it was at UCSF. She was up there for some reason at a regents' meeting, so I asked her if I could talk to her. We sat in the cafeteria at UCSF and had a conversation. It was, in retrospect, very funny. Because I very hesitantly, almost stammeringly, was trying to lead into the point of saying, "You know, Aimeé Dorr really doesn't like you." I didn't want to say it in quite those words, so I was really making a bit of a hash of it.

At a certain point, Sandy interrupted me and said, "George, are you telling me that Aimeé Dorr can't stand me and really doesn't want me to be in this role?" I said, yeah. She said, "Oh, I knew that. That's no big deal." (laughter)

So I did reappoint Sandy and she did stay director for another year. Ultimately, when the search was done, it was done through the Office of the President, Claire was appointed as the director, and still is the director.

I think since then, things have stabilized. I think they've stabilized a lot. We've hired a bunch of people. Things are going well. There are instruments being developed there. The department is a place that's really humming with activity. I'm particularly proud of their diversity efforts. They continue to bring in graduate classes that are twice the size of what they used to be and 50 percent of them are women.

Reti: That's fabulous.

Blumenthal: And other measures of diversity as well. Since Enrico's been the chair of the department, that's been a major priority. Astronomy has, with no interference on my part—I mean I had no role to play in that as a faculty member there—but they've really, they've improved diversity and I think have been a model for other departments, so much so that at a certain point, when Enrico was concerned because he couldn't recruit a department manager because of the pay that was being offered to the program, because they don't have a major, I did intervene.

Reti: What do you mean: "they don't have a major?"

Blumenthal: There's no undergraduate astronomy major, per se. They're essentially part of the physics major. So I stepped in and raised the support for the department, which of course has all the appearance of conflict of interest. But in fact, the reason I did it was not because I'm an astronomer. The reason I did it was because of Enrico's commitment to, and demonstrated results with regards to diversity of the department. I wanted to make a statement about the importance of diversity, not the importance of astronomy.

But that has generated some criticism around campus, and I just wanted to put that out there.

Reti: So you're talking about support for being able to hire a department manager.

Blumenthal: We raised the level of the department manager.

Reti: I see, in terms of the classification of the position.

Blumenthal: Yes. So I'm the guilty party, but the reason I did it, again, was not astronomy per se, it was diversity. So they're doing well.

Reti: That's great. That's a happy story.

Blumenthal: I can't quite think of it as a happy story, because I'm still bitter about the steps along the way.

Reti: I suppose it's a disaster averted, flourishing despite disaster in many ways.

Blumenthal: Yes.

California Institute of Regenerative Medicine

Reti: Okay. So today is Friday, April 26, 2019. This is Irene Reti and I'm here for my 32nd interview with Chancellor George Blumenthal for the oral history we're doing together. Today we're going to start by talking about CERM.

Blumenthal: Okay. So I was approached by Art Torres, who was a former state senator and a banana slug [UCSC alum].³⁶⁷ Also, for a time he was a member of our foundation board as well. Art approached me because he is the vice chair of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine, called CIRM, which was the organization that was founded by a state proposition that basically allocated a large amount of money, \$3 billion, to stem

cell research. This was done at a time during the Bush Administration when there was a federal prohibition about doing stem cell research with embryonic stem cells. So California, I think very wisely, decided to jump start that approach by providing funding within California in the hope that it would help California industries to develop treatments for diseases, and in the hope that it would really develop new treatments that would be beneficial to people suffering from a wide variety of diseases. It's been a very successful organization. They've done a lot of funding of basic research, as well as clinical trials.

It turns out that the board of CIRM has by mandate of the proposition, set a fixed number of representatives, some representing various organizations dealing with people who suffer from diseases, and some representing academic organizations. One of the seats on CIRM is reserved for an official of a University of California campus without a medical school. For a number of years, probably about eight or nine years, that representative was from Berkeley. But he retired and the lieutenant governor wanted to move it around a little bit. So Art suggested me. So I agreed to join the CIRM board. That was maybe three years ago.

It's an interesting time in their history because CIRM was given I think it was three billion dollars. I can't remember that for sure, what the size of the bond was. But it's almost used up and unless something happens, CIRM will disappear in another year or year and a half, and will have expended all this funding. So there is now a discussion of putting a renewal of CIRM on the 2020 ballot.

Art has been extremely active in the group. He is one of its strongest advocates. And he worked on Gavin Newsom, who was lieutenant governor at the time, because this appointment was a lieutenant gubernatorial appointment. Once I agreed to Art to do it, it

took a while for anything to happen. But I was finally approached by Gavin and we had a very brief interview at a regents meeting. He seemed satisfied that I was both interested and informed. So the appointment went through, which I was very pleased about because CIRM has been important for UCSC. In the early days of CIRM, Santa Cruz got as many grants as many of the larger campuses got. We were remarkably successful. We also got money for space. In fact, the money for the top floor of the Biomedical building all came from CIRM. I talked about that before.

Reti: We did talk about that.

Blumenthal: CIRM has been very good for the campus, of late, probably less good than in earlier years, because in the last few years of CIRM, the board (and I was complicit in this decision), decided to concentrate our efforts on clinical trials because as we go back to the voters, the voters are going to want to see what cures came out of it. Some more obscure advances in stem cell theory or basic science are probably not going to be of as much interest to voters in California as cures for diseases.

It's been an interesting experience. They've had some amazing successes in terms of some of the projects they funded. CIRM does something at their board meetings that, in a way, I don't approve of. They tend to bring some victim of some disease who has had a miraculous cure to come and talk to the board about how this—(Reti laughs) On one level it's just so uplifting to see these people. But at another level, it does play on emotions. As a board member, I feel obliged to be a bit more objective and hard-hearted in my approach to decision making. But still, it's remarkable to be a part of something that could change people's lives in the way that it does. It's just absolutely astonishing. Stem cell research is still in many ways in its infancy, even though it's already being used in a variety of treatments. Many of the clinical trials that we funded are now coming to fruition in terms

of real treatment. So I think CIRM has been extremely successful as a group, and I am so impressed.

I'm also impressed because the NIH has chosen to partner with CIRM in a number of programs. Part of the reason is that they've so appreciated how CIRM goes about evaluating and deciding which projects to fund. So I walked into a very successful organization. I'd like to think I have had some positive effect on it, but it was successful before I arrived. Hopefully, it will continue to be successful.

Most Embarrassing Moment as Chancellor

Okay, on another topic that I wanted to cover— Well, somebody once asked me what was my most embarrassing moment as chancellor was. (Reti laughs) It was an introduction to one of our foundation board members, Frans Lanting.³⁶⁸ I was supposed to introduce Frans Lanting at one of his presentations at the Rio Theater. When I get talking points in advance, I usually read them over a few times. For some reason, I kind of quickly read these over once. I just was going to read my introduction. I wasn't going to make it a big deal. But there were about four hundred people in the audience.

Reti: Those events are super popular.

Blumenthal: Yeah, super popular. So I get up there and I'm reading my notes. And I would point out to you that the word "inducted" is one letter away from the word "indicted."

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs)

Blumenthal: So reading along these notes, I go, "And when he was in Germany, Frans was indicted."

Reti: Oh my God! (laughs) I'm sure he loved that.

Blumenthal: The whole audience started roaring with laughter. It took me a minute to realize. I mean, I was just reading words, right? It took me a minute to realize what I had done. Then I apologized or stumbled or whatever and corrected it. Frans didn't mind. I later apologized to Frans. He may have thought it was funny.

Reti: He probably did.

Blumenthal: But he was not offended by it.

Reti: Well, if that's the worst moment, that's not too bad, George.

Blumenthal: But who would have thought that two words with such different meanings differing by that one letter.

A Controversial Project: Student Housing West

Reti: We're now going to talk about Student Housing West.

Blumenthal: Okay. So it's obvious, and has been obvious for quite some time, that we as a campus needed to build a lot more housing. That's due to the growth of the campus. It's due to the increasing rents and the decreasing supply of housing in Santa Cruz. It's an issue because of the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement. We made a commitment to house two-thirds of all new students on campus. So we have a real commitment for more housing on campus. And we've known that for a long time.

Even though I've been chancellor for thirteen years, we have not constructed that much campus housing since I've been chancellor. We have done some, particularly associated with renovation projects. For example, in Porter College they added a story and added, I don't know, a few hundred beds to Porter College when we did a remodeling of the college

dormitories. We've done some of the same things in several of the other colleges as well. We've done remodeling or fixes to the existing dorms. But we haven't really done a major new housing project, in the sense of creating thousands of beds for the campus. So that's something we've wanted to do for a very, very long time. And it's not like we wanted to do it and never tried. We have been trying.

The first issue was to identify the kind of housing and where it would go. That was pretty easy. It was clear that we needed to build something on the west side of campus. That's where growth was. That's where there's easy land available, with utilities and roads, etcetera, so it would be cheap for students to build stuff and have it occupied by students. So that was an easy kind of first draft decision to make. We needed to define a project, but we were going to do that. But we had a major stumbling block. The major stumbling block was we didn't know how to pay for it. And that's because of something called the campus debt capacity. So let me explain that.

Debt capacity was the stumbling block. If you're a private citizen, you can borrow money. If you want to take out a loan to build a house or to buy a house, you can take out a loan. And if your credit rating isn't very good, you can still get a loan. You may have to pay a much higher interest rate. It's always an issue of risk versus cost.

And it's not all that different for public institutions like a university. We borrow money in a way that's consistent across the UC system. So the campuses don't have the authority, and maybe rightly so, to set our own criteria for how much risk we're willing to take and what kind of ratings we're willing to take from lenders. That is a decision that's set by the Office of the President. The Office of the President has a very clear and very specific set of requirements that the campuses must meet in order to get a loan, or even to apply for a loan. The reason that they have those criteria is because the university has set a policy

that we want to maintain a certain level of bond or debt ratings by the major funding organizations. I don't remember what it is, but whatever it is, we want to keep it. Because if our ranking or ratings went down by a level, the interest rates would go up. So UCOP has set that criteria. They set it at a level, and they have changed it a bit over the years, in what I regard as technical ways. But the key thing is that they've always set it in a way to maintain the same bond rating.

The result of that is, that for virtually all UC campuses, including Santa Cruz, we basically have very little debt capacity remaining. We may have had some in the past, but not anymore. San Diego, I believe, has substantial debt capacity, but they are a unique campus because of their large revenues from external grants. But I think if you take out San Diego, and maybe San Francisco, because they're in a completely different world, the remaining eight campuses are all pushed up against their debt capacity.

So as we contemplated doing a large housing project on the west side of campus, we knew we were up against that limitation and we didn't really know how to get around it. Well, we knew how to get around it, but we didn't know a way that would be acceptable to the Office of the President.

So, I guess almost two years ago now, there was a chancellors' retreat in the mountains outside of Riverside. And at that retreat, somewhat to my consternation, Janet asked all of the chancellors to give brief PowerPoint presentations on the state of the campus. I was irritated because I don't like to prepare stuff for a retreat. So I prepared, as did the other chancellors, some presentation, but I put on mine that one of our biggest challenges was that we couldn't build housing. I carefully explained what the limitation was. I knew that the other chancellors would all agree with me, so I laid it on pretty thick about how the restrictions on debt capacity were preventing the campuses from building adequate

housing for students, and that for campuses like Santa Cruz, in an area where there is no additional housing in the community, this is completely devastating and sets us back in many, many ways. I made my case. I argued that one solution was to change the systemwide restrictions on debt capacity to allow, to liberalize them even if that implies a somewhat higher interest rate, and we're talking tenths of a point. We're not talking usurious interest rates. So that was one way to go.

But Janet decided to go in a different direction. Within a month or so of that retreat, I was very pleased that she did it; I was pleased that it was something that clearly emanated from something that I had put out there. She issued something that became known as the President's Housing Initiative. This was in an era when everything was an initiative. The idea of the President's Housing Initiative was several-fold. One was that she wanted to build a lot of housing. Secondly, she wanted to do this housing using a P3 model, a public-private partnership model, which I'll come back to in just one minute. And third, she wanted UCOP to be the agency that chose, or limited us to six potential developers for this public-private partnership, which I thought was a great idea. In Santa Cruz, the way we would normally build dormitories is we would make the decision to do it. We would design it. We would actually have bids from contractors on doing the project. And then we would borrow the money. Typically, what we would do at Santa Cruz was borrow 90 percent of the money and pay 10 percent of it out of housing reserves. But we always had a problem getting contractors to bid on our large projects. Because this is Santa Cruz; we don't have that many large contractors. It's difficult to find companies that would come over the hill to build a project here. And even if you can find such companies, they'll charge you a premium because they and their subcontractors have to go over the hill to come here. It's not impossible, it's just you pay a major premium. So I was delighted that UCOP would select the six developers. I thought, and it turned out I was right, none of those six would

have been developers who ever would have come to Santa Cruz. But now, A, they kind of have to, and B, because we were first out of the door with this new initiative, they had motivation to show themselves well. They may not have cared about Santa Cruz, but they sure did care about UCLA or San Diego or other places where they might get contracts. So to me that was all very good.

The issue of the P3 was not new to UC. It had been done before many times at UC Irvine. That had been their preferred mode of building housing. It's worked extremely well there.

Reti: Isn't it something that's being used at other universities?

Blumenthal: Around the country?

Reti: Across the country.

Blumenthal: Yes. But I think the big one in UC has been UC Irvine.

Now we don't often do well with new ways of doing things. For example, stepping back from public-private partnerships, one big issue that I've heard a lot about since I became chancellor was the issue of design-build. The way we would normally do things on this campus was if we're going to build something, we figure out where we're getting the money from, then we hire an architect and the architect designs it. And then we bid on it and we hire a contractor to build it. And then it gets built and then we're done. That's our normal mode. Almost everything on campus has been built that way.

But design-build involves getting the money and then hiring a developer who both designs it and builds it according to your specifications. So you have to be much clearer about your needs from the beginning. You don't go through a separate design and separate build phase. You just do that in one fell swoop. It means things are faster. It can mean things

are cheaper because faster saves money. But it's also cheaper because you're using essentially one company to do all of this.

One of the big advocates for design-build was Jack Baskin. Jack really wanted us to do design-build on the campus. I talked to him many times about it. And in fact, he's very proud of the fact that, I think, the Seymour Center was built using design-build. I think that's the building.

Soon after I became chancellor, I heard a lot from Jack about the advantage of this approach. So I went to Tom Vani and I said, "Look, why don't we just do everything we're going to do design-build." Tom said, "Let me tell you what it's really like. When we built the Seymour Center, it was so problematic in so many ways that we were ordered by UCOP never to do this again." He had problems saying that to Jack. But that's what Tom said, and I do believe Tom. But it's also true that other campuses started using design-build to a greater extent over time. So it was clear that this was something that, even if we had problems with it fifteen years ago, it was something that we would want to be considering going forward.

The idea of the P3 would be to hire a private developer who would design and build the housing based on our specifications. Again, I want to emphasize, there's a requirement on us to make sure that we've completely specified what we want, or are willing to have. But you would do that if you hired an architect as well. One difference is that on our campus, we do not have a good record of designing a building and then sticking with the design. Our campus has a tendency to want to make changes along the way. Those are expensive. They make things go over budget. It shows a lack of discipline in terms of being able to get stuff done from the beginning rather than change your mind along the way.

There are times when it's legitimate to change your mind. Sometimes you don't have a choice.

Reti: Well, certainly having to drop the Music Building further into the ground because of the controversy around blocking the view of the meadow would be an example of, you have to.

Blumenthal: That's an example. Or if you're doing a remodel of something, or you're connecting to an existing structure, it may be that you'll discover things you didn't know would happen. Or even in a new structure, if it turns out you're building over a sinkhole or something. So stuff happens that does force you to change your design. But even acknowledging that, the campus has a history of making lots of programmatic changes at the last minute. Again, with programmatic changes—sometimes things do change, so maybe there is a reason to do it. I think the prime example of that was—I'm not sure I total sympathize with this—but the UCLA Reagan Hospital when they built it, halfway through they had to make major changes because there was a revolution going on in the way hospitals were being built. A lot more electronics in the walls needed to be put in. So they did some huge changes along the way there. That made it a lot more expensive. But my suspicion is they had to do that.

So the private developer designs it and builds it. Then we use tax-free bonds to finance it. And because we're a nonprofit, we can use tax-free bonds. The bonds are actually taken out (and I'm not sure I understand this in great detail), by our developer. But we guarantee the bond. So the campus has to issue a guarantee that the payments will be made. Then when the housing is built, the idea is to transfer its ownership to a nonprofit organization which is set up. There are nonprofits who do this. And they rent the land from the campus, the land on which the housing project is built. They do maintenance of

the project. The campus operates the project through our housing office, so from a student perspective, the students only interact with the campus housing office. And then ultimately when the debt is paid off, the lease ends and the whole thing reverts to the campus. The ownership reverts to the campus.

Reti: Then there's no longer a public-private partnership.

Blumenthal: No. The public-private partnership is an interim measure. It might last thirty years, but it's an interim measure only during the time period in which the loan exists. Another advantage of this is—you may remember that we had four major dormitory projects that developed leakage problems and needed major, major repairs with costs running into the tens of millions of dollars for the campus. We can argue about was the campus at fault. We didn't think the campus was at fault. We felt that the contractor was at fault. The contractor, of course, will always argue in such cases that the campus didn't do adequate upkeep. This avoids all of that because we're not building it and we're not maintaining the upkeep of it and therefore the cost of upkeep automatically falls either on the developer or on the nonprofit. So, such a problem would not exist under the P3 model.

So there're a lot of advantages to the P3 model. I understand that the idea of a private entity, or a non-UC entity running something on the campus, in some sense, is objectionable to some people. I get that. But again, I emphasize that, in terms of students, they would never know. I mean, it's not that we're hiding it, but in terms of their interactions, they would never interact with anyone other than our housing office. The difference is that major upkeep would all be done by this other entity, so the university would be out of it. All we've got to do is rent the rooms and have the students pay and

clean the room, or whatever minor things we do. But the major stuff would be done by the other entities. So that's the basic idea of the public-private partnership.

But the key thing that I didn't say yet is that in this model, the loan is taken out by the other entities, by the private partner, not by us. Therefore, it doesn't count against our debt capacity, even though we're guaranteeing the loan. That's the concept. And again, how can I say this, particularly on our campus, there is opposition. The mere name: "public-private partnership" raises hackles in some of our constituents.

Reti: The argument would be that there's a company making profit off of public university land, essentially.

Blumenthal: Yes. That's right. But I would point out to you that number one, if we hire a contractor to build the buildings, it's still dealing with a private entity that's making a profit from constructing the buildings. Furthermore, number two, the operation of the buildings is run by a nonprofit organization, so it's not like they're on a continuing basis over thirty years profiting off the students.

Reti: So I would imagine there would be a vulnerability that if the company or the nonprofit that is running the housing doesn't keep to their end of the deal on upkeep, the university could end up in a tricky situation.

Blumenthal: Well, we would presumably sue them.

Reti: That's what I would imagine would happen, but I could imagine that being complex.

Blumenthal: But the point is, since they do have a continuing responsibility, it's their responsibility to make sure that the upkeep is done. And therefore, if a problem develops, the problem is either due to the private company that built it, or whatever company is doing maintenance, or due to the nonprofit entity. But it's not us.

Reti: Right. And they have an incentive to keep it up because they also have a loan.

Blumenthal: So it's not a bad concept.

Now another issue is we wanted to put this project on the west side of campus and we had a lot of land there, basically where Family Student Housing is. So the idea was to put the whole project there. We wanted to make it a big project, like three thousand beds. Now, we of course, do have students living in Family Student Housing and we have to worry about them. What are they going to do in the meantime?

So for a couple of years, Sarah Latham (Vice Chancellor of Business and Administrative Services) put a lot of effort into exploring whether there was some way we could rent some space in town where we could put those students on a temporary basis until we finished the project. The idea is move them out, do the project, and move them back in. The short answer to that question was no. Given the housing crisis in Santa Cruz, which is extreme, with a 99 percent occupancy rate in rental housing throughout the city, there was just no way to be able to rent enough space off campus to house even those 140, or whatever it is units that we currently have. That was not feasible. So we realized from the beginning we were going to have to do this project in phases. The first phase was going to have to be to quickly construct new housing for our family students there on the site and then do the rest of the project. Or, we could do the project, but that we had to quickly get something in place for them to live in.

The other thing we wanted to do, since we were doing it anyway, was put in a childcare center. We already do have a childcare center for students that was going to be destroyed as we destroyed Family Student Housing. So that would have to be replaced. But I also wanted to establish childcare for faculty and staff.

Reti: That's been a big issue.

Blumenthal: That's been a big issue and I don't think I've talked about it.

Reti: You have not.

Blumenthal: All right. So now a little excursion into a discussion of childcare. So, this may make you laugh, but when I became the acting chancellor at Santa Cruz, we had at the time an operating childcare center for students, and a separate one for faculty and staff. Not very satisfactory facilities for either. There'd been long talk of building a new childcare facility. In fact, Kelly and I made a donation to the campus for a childcare facility. I mean, not a lot of money, but some money.

So it was clear that we needed to do that for the campus. There was even money from UCOP, a million to a million and a half dollars—it still exists—from UCOP to help each campus build new childcare. All the other campuses used it up long ago, but we never have. Every few years we always check to make sure that money's sitting there in some account that hasn't gotten lost yet.

So when I came in as acting chancellor, I really did not believe that I would be the permanent chancellor, so I tried to think about what could I accomplish in a year that would have a lasting benefit to the campus? One of my goals for that year was to finalize and move forward on a new childcare center. Well, it was a great goal. (Reti laughs) And how did that turn out?

Reti: Here we are thirteen years later, right.

Blumenthal: Thirteen years later, we have made no progress toward that goal.

So the first thing I wanted to do was to find a site. And, oh my God, we scoured our campus over and over and over again for the ideal site for childcare. Of course, everyone has opinions. But, in fact, there really aren't great options there because, in my opinion,

childcare needs to be, first of all, near an entrance to campus. Because yes, a lot of campus people will use childcare, but also people who live off campus will use childcare and it makes no sense to me to have it in the middle of campus, which is one of the reasons I have so resisted, for example, the proposal to put the childcare center where University House is even though some of our major donors think that that is the ideal solution to all of the campus' problems. I think it needs to be near an entrance.

Reti: Well, and this is also related to the traffic issue, right?

Blumenthal: Of course. It's related to traffic issues; it's related to access issues.

There are some other sites that are possibilities. But, for example, the stonehouse, which we were using at the time—it's clearly not going to be feasible to use that. We'd either have to tear it down and rebuild there or do something else. And there were some historic reasons why you don't want to do it at that site.

Then there was another site that's on the knoll kind of across from the infamous Hagar site today, which is feasible. It's not a lot of land, but something could be done there on the other side of the road. And there were a few other sites that had been identified, but nothing really ideal. It was difficult to do that. And, of course, what we really wanted to do was to find a way to do it in an inexpensive way so we could get it done quickly without having to do a major campaign to raise money for it. So finding a site proved to be extremely difficult. Over the years, we've had various committees looking at that.

And then, the second problem is, of course, finding the money for it. It is remarkably difficult to raise money for a childcare center. There are some people who are willing to give, so we could raise some money, it was clear. But we really needed a big donor and that, we were having trouble finding one, though we did try.

Nothing much happened that year, other than lots of effort. Then I was appointed chancellor. Not long after I was appointed chancellor, I was greeted with a huge number of problems with our faculty and staff childcare center. We got complaints and we got more complaints. And then we got more complaints from faculty and staff whose children were at the stone house. Some of those complaints had to do with the facility itself, which was lacking in a variety of ways and maybe problematic to continue to operate. Some of the complaints related to the staff and how the operators of the facility were doing. There were incidents that I heard about where children were left unattended in the parking lot. There was some outing to someplace where, a lake or there was some water, and a child was left unattended and started to wander into the water. Things that were just, as a parent I would find disturbing, at the very least. Nothing bad happened, so that was all right, but you know just from life that it may only be once in a hundred times that something like that would happen where it would turn out to be tragic, but you don't want to have too many one-in-a-hundred times chances in your life. So this was clearly problematic.

We were also having significant turnover in the staff, particularly in the leadership. Again, I'm not an expert on this, but there are various certificates and licenses that somebody has to have in order to run a childcare facility. We have people with those certifications and licenses. But as people left, it became more and more difficult to make sure that we had all of that paperwork in order because we are a small operation. So that was going on.

Meanwhile, the complaints kept coming in. As I say, some of those complaints were, in my view, legitimate. Eventually people complained to the state licensing authority, so they came and they did an investigation. Their investigation came up with a report that was pretty devastatingly negative about the childcare facility. The bottom line is, with a lot of interactions from our attorney, Carole Rossi, we came within a gnat's eyelash of losing

our license. It really, really was a close call. We were put on probation for a long period of time.

So we made the decision to close the facility. It just felt like we didn't know what the hell we were doing. It was clearly going to cost us a lot of money, and things were starting to go bad with the budget by then. This was just around the start of the great recession. Virtually all problems that we have, we could solve with an infusion of money, but at a time of difficult resources, that's just not an option. We made that decision. Dave Klinger really felt it was the only option we had. I was more reluctant, but at the end of the day, I made that call and I have to own it.

Over the years since then, we have put in place many committees to look at how we would restart faculty and staff childcare. The Senate Committee on Faculty Welfare has done a number of studies of their own on what we need to do just to restart it. The Campus Welfare Committee has looked at it. We've had group after group after group looking at this, so it hasn't been for lack of interest. Bringing it to fruition in a way that's affordable for the campus is the real challenge.

Then, complicating the matter, although I don't think it's an unsolvable complication, was a strong desire on the part of our psychology faculty to build a childcare center that could be used as a laboratory to study the psychology of children in a setting. I think that we did a lot of research on this here at one time. I don't know whether you know this, but Kerr Hall, where we now sit, was originally a social sciences building and they did experiments with children, children's interactions. So they had that desire, which I think is a perfectly fine desire. But it's again another complication. Ultimately, I didn't know where the money would come from to make this work.

Until we started thinking about rebuilding Family Student Housing. We were going to have to rebuild the childcare center anyway. We could include it in a bigger project. It still, in some sense, had to be self-supporting. But once it's included in a bigger project, then there were all kinds of savings you have from doing it that way. And if we're going to have to build a new childcare center for our students, why the hell not make it a bigger one and include faculty and staff? And furthermore, from a standpoint of efficiency, I don't understand why we would want to have separate ones for faculty and staff and students.

So we decided to combine the childcare center with our new Family Student Housing. That became a part of the plan. So we took these six developers and we did a request for proposals for them to make a proposal to be one of the finalists to submit a plan. From those six, we chose three. And with each of those three, we basically gave them the outline of what we needed, which was three thousand beds on the west side of campus—what they were for, what we needed included—and we told them to come up with a plan and present it. So they did. And we had a committee that included students and faculty and staff, but also our staff, to look at and do charrettes, and just do very careful analysis of the proposals from the three finalists. Ultimately, they recommended one of the finalists, Capstone. Again, as always, it's my call. But it seemed like a pretty easy decision, given the recommendation of the committee. That's how we ended up with Capstone and that's how we ended up with the proposal that we had then.

Now since then, of course, somebody has come up with some issues about Capstone itself having to do with—I don't know what they did years ago—they did something that people had objections to, but it turned out that it was a subsidiary that they no longer own. So you know, yeah—they did something long ago that was bad. But that's not their company today. And I kind of wonder whether any major company that's existed for a long time might not have some things in their closet. For me that wasn't an issue. The issue was

we're going to have a contract. They've got to deliver. That was what was important. And frankly, they've been really good to work with. So we were getting ready to go with this.

But then, of course, we were also doing environmental assessment. One of the things that arose from the environmental assessment was that the red-legged frog was going to be more of a problem than we thought. Now, the red-legged frog has been around the campus for a long time. It's been an impediment to other projects on campus. I even remember once when M.R.C. Greenwood invited me to a dinner. I asked her what she was serving.

Reti: Uh-oh.

Blumenthal: And was it possibly red-legged frog legs? (Reti laughs) Which she didn't find funny.

Reti: Sorry. (laughs) I do.

Blumenthal: My weird sense of humor.

Reti: Well, then we must share that weird sense of humor.

Blumenthal: So it was clear that what the red-legged frogs needed was pathways. We needed to preserve their pathways through the region.

Reti: Right. Like migratory corridors and stuff.

Blumenthal: Yes. Migratory corridors. They thought a lot about what to do and realized that yes, you could build the project still in that same area; it would be a much-reduced area, but it would be extremely expensive to keep the whole project on the much-reduced site. The site had been reduced to about a third of its previous size. And furthermore, it would look like something that you might have expected at UCLA.

Reti: The density.

Blumenthal: A high-density site. So we had a meeting with Capstone and included some of our senior vice chancellors, certainly Sarah [Latham] and Peggy [Delaney] and Marlene [Tromp]. We included some senior senate leadership; the chair of faculty welfare, I remember, was there. We went over a number of options for how to proceed. One of the things was the issue of cost. We knew we had to keep the cost down in order to keep the housing ultimately affordable. And since I'm talking about costs, I may as well just say right now the way we do housing on this campus is that we socialize the costs. So traditionally, if we build a new dormitory and you move into the new dormitory, you basically pay the same amount as anyone in any dormitory on campus. You don't pay a premium for living in the new dormitory.

Reti: Oh, I see. Otherwise you would have a million different rates for housing.

Blumenthal: We'd have a million different rates, and it would be really expensive to live in the newest dorms. So one of the ways we keep costs down for the students is to socialize the costs. That means that people living in an old dorm whose loan is completely paid off are going to pay the same amount. So they're essentially paying for some of the loan to build the new dormitory that somebody else is living in. That's a decision we've made as a campus. I think it's the right decision.

Reti: Is that unusual?

Blumenthal: I don't think so, but I don't know. Anyway, keeping the cost down is important, from the standpoint of student rents. I also want to mention, and I think I forgot to mention this earlier, that when I became chancellor we had the second highest housing costs for on-campus housing in the UC system, even though we housed the highest percentage of students of any public university except for one in California. So we

were number two for cost in the UC system, and I didn't like that. I really pushed hard to do everything we could to keep our rates down. Today, right now, I think we are fourth in the UC system, which I think is significant progress. But I will also admit to you that a good chunk of that change was due to the fact that we are now shoehorning students into lounges and into bigger rooms.

Reti: You mean because the students are sharing lounges and stuff like that.

Blumenthal: Rooms that were built for two students, we now have three students in. Lounges that were built to be lounges, we now have students living in. That allows us to keep our costs down. That's not why we did it. We needed the housing; that's why we did it. But one of the ancillary benefits is it keeps the cost down.

So one of the considerations was cost. Another consideration was appearance. Another consideration was practicality, in terms of the various sites. As I recall, there were like five or six options that we considered that day. It was pretty clear to me that the best of those choices was to go to the Hagar site. So it was at that meeting when that was chosen, at the bottom of the East Meadow. The idea was to put Family Student Housing and childcare there so that we could build them first, move the families and childcare out of the existing Family Student Housing, and that frees up the land to build the rest of Student Housing West.

I remember Peggy asked me whether or not I was prepared for the pushback that might come from residents across the street who didn't want students living so close to faculty and staff housing. I said, "Yeah, I'm prepared for it." Little did I know that that wasn't going to be the main opposition to this project. I actually didn't anticipate that it would be as viral or as vociferous as it has turned out to be, out of the desire to build absolutely nothing on the East Meadow ever, for reasons of viewshed. But anyway, that is what it is.

I thought the opposition was going to come from the neighbors. I don't think that's been the problem.

So again, the project Student Housing West is three thousand beds, plus or minus a few, to be built. The beds would be all for upper-division students plus graduate students. We desperately need graduate student housing, plus replacement of Family Student Housing. I think 140 family student housing units was what we were thinking about. It's more beds than 140, because families don't all live in one bed.

Reti: (laughs) I should hope not.

Blumenthal: Well, they used to. In society.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: And if we build those 3,000 beds, our projection was, we did a number of surveys of students and we concluded that it would not be a problem to attract students back to the campus from the town. We would be able to fill those beds. In fact, our plan is not to fill all of the beds, but rather to set aside eight or nine-hundred of those beds to basically replace the lounges as lounges in the other dormitories throughout the campus. We want to make the lounges lounges again. That will cost us eight or nine hundred beds. Then the remaining 21 or 2200 beds will all be new beds. We believe that those new beds are needed just for our current campus population of students. So despite what some people have said, I have been consistent about this meeting our current needs. Even if we grow not another student on this campus, we still need those beds.

Another aspect of the project is that it has to be financially feasible and financially affordable for students. But the affordability piece, I think has two parts to it. One is when it opens it needs to be cheaper than equivalent housing in town. I think we will make that

criterion. Secondly, I insisted we set it up in a way that the cost increases in rent will never exceed 3 percent per year.

The cheaper in town piece is a little bit more complicated because we do have to compare apples to apples. And that's a little bit difficult sometimes because it isn't so easy to compare. But I would point out to you that, for a student, it might be cheaper to live in town if the student lives in a house that's, say a three-bedroom house, and puts five students in a bedroom, they probably will be able to live much more cheaply than they could live on campus. But for something equivalent in town to an equivalency on campus, we would be cheaper.

Reti: I don't know if you're going to get to this, George, but the design of this housing—describing it as high-rises would be going too far, but it is multi-story.

Blumenthal: So let me say a word about that now, but I want to come back to it later, so I'm not going to tell the whole story. The design of the site on the west side of campus, because the land area was much smaller, had to be modified to make the buildings taller. So we designed some buildings that were significantly taller than other buildings have been on campus. In particular, the tallest of those buildings would have been ten stories, had we proceeded with the first modified plan. Not all the buildings. And they were tiered in a way that it didn't appear nearly so bad.

But the issue of the height of buildings on the campus is interesting because originally the design framework for the campus was that we would not build buildings taller than the trees. That's been a design consideration that's basically led to the heights of buildings on campus. But the campus was built in 1960 to '65, in the early '60s, and all of the trees on the campus at that time were about fifty years old because our campus was clear-cut back around 1910 to provide the wood to rebuild San Francisco after the earthquake. So

virtually all of the trees on this campus are the same age. When the campus was built, they were about fifty years old. Well, guess what? They're now about 100 years old and they're taller. So I would argue that the same design principle that has been in force since the campus opened allows us to build taller buildings today than we could build fifty years ago. So the idea of taller, from my perspective, is not a bad idea. And from the perspective of a campus that's riddled with karst topography and sinkholes, the idea of building buildings a little taller so you make maximum use of your buildable space also makes a certain amount of sense.

Reti: I've interviewed people over the years who have said there's a rather suburban aspect to the campus as it originally was conceived, which was kind of sprawling. There could be an argument that density would be a more environmental way of approaching a site like this.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: However, I could also imagine someone saying, there aren't tall redwoods on every site on campus. And the site of the current Family Student Housing is not a redwood-forested site, so you're not going to hide the buildings in the trees.

Blumenthal: Yes. All of that is true. Indeed, tall redwoods are not everywhere on campus. That is absolutely true. It's also true that the campus started out being remarkably sprawling in terms of its design, very suburban in nature; that's also true. But I don't think that the originators of the campus understood the underground structure below the campus. We know they didn't, because when they built Engineering 1, they drilled in and tried to fill a sinkhole with concrete.

Reti: Right. That building was called Applied Sciences at the time.

Blumenthal: So there's no question that the original campus designers didn't understand entirely what they were dealing with. It's even worse than that because recently Sarah Latham did this interesting study where she took the full two-thousand-acre campus, and then she started excluding areas that are in the Campus Reserve, which you can't build on. And then she excluded areas that had severe environmental issues. And then she excluded areas in which there were artifacts from Native Americans. And then she excluded areas that had underground stuff going on. And then she excluded areas that were on steep slopes, and therefore very expensive and difficult to build on. And if you look at the campus map, as she takes away each of those areas in turn, what ends up is a map that's very much like our existing built-up campus and which has relatively little land area. In fact, the total area that's left after she does all those exclusions on our 2,000-acre campus is about the same as the acreage of UCLA.

Reti: So the amount of buildable space is very low.

Blumenthal: That's right. The amount of buildable space—

Reti: Even if you count the north campus.

Blumenthal: Yes. This includes the north campus.

Reti: Well, that's important to get on the record.

Blumenthal: Yes. I think it is important to be on the record. This campus really can't sustain the kind of sprawling suburban setting that we started out doing even though it was a reasonable assumption at the time. That's also a reason why the meadow might be a place where, or pieces of the meadow, or the East Meadow, might be not the most unreasonable place to build. But that's another story entirely.

So anyway, when the plans started coming out, we made sure that there were articles that appeared. There was an article in the *Sentinel*; there was an article that was in our on-campus publication, the *Tuesday Newsday*. But then, sometime later, months later, it blew up. The first thing that happened is that we were accused of having hidden the decision to build on the East Meadow. It wasn't true. We hadn't hidden it. It may be that we weren't as out there with it as maybe some people felt we should have been. Certainly, some people didn't know about it. But it isn't because we were trying to hide it. It was in the *Sentinel* article. It was in the *Tuesday Newsday* article. It was all out there. People just ignored it. That's, to me, on them, not on us. But that hasn't stopped us from being accused of having tried to hide that decision from the campus.

Reti: Well, if I remember right, part of the criticism—I hope you don't mind me playing devil's advocate—

Blumenthal: No, please.

Reti: I feel like people would assume I would ask these questions. Part of the criticism was the entitling of the project as Student Housing West, but the proposed 140 units are on the East Meadow.

Blumenthal: That's a fair criticism, actually. We kept the title. We kept the title because that was always the title. In retrospect, I wish we had changed the title to something that was more descriptive of its location. So I agree. That's a perfectly fair criticism.

Once it started being out there, it generated a lot of opposition—from alumni, from foundation members, from emeriti, from people who have been around the campus for a long time. Most of the opposition fell into several categories, the main one being that there are those who believe we should not, under any circumstances, build in the East Meadow,

that there's a viewshed issue there, that this is an iconic campus view and we should do nothing to change it. That's not an illegitimate argument, but it is only an argument.

Another concern was the height of the buildings that were being proposed on the west part of the campus: high rises at UCSC. The third opposition had to do with public-private partnerships, just as a matter of general principle. A fourth opposition was that we were deviating from the campus vision of building our housing in colleges, and that by housing students not in colleges, we were fundamentally undermining the very nature of the campus. Those were some of the major points of opposition.

Reti: In terms of the first issue you mentioned around the decision to build in the meadow, I've heard some people say that there's language in the LRDP that prohibits that, that this is a protected area. I don't know if that's true or not.

Blumenthal: Thank you for asking that question. So let me say a little bit more about that meadow location. First, the original Long Range Development Plan of the UCSC campus envisioned building in the East Meadow. The land is designated as a building site. Second, the second Long Range Development Plan at UCSC also designated that area as an area to be built. So the accusation that somehow our founders thought that this was sacred land that should never be built on is complete balderdash.

Reti: By the first plan, are you referring to the plan that the city put forth that showed the whole campus being located on the meadow? Or this is even later than—

Blumenthal: No, no, no. It was later than that.

Reti: Okay. Because I know there was a model that was put forth by the city back during the courtship days, saying this is where you're going to put the campus right in the meadow and nowhere else. Then Thomas Church moved it up into the trees, right?

Blumenthal: Yes. Right.

Reti: We're talking about after that.

Blumenthal: We're talking about after that. But it was always seen as something, at least in those days—

Reti: Yeah. But if you go back and look at those documents, you would see that in the '63 LRDP and the later one, that site was designated as buildable land.

Blumenthal: Yes. It was designated as buildable land. Later LRDPs and in particular, the 2005 LRDP, designated it as, I don't remember the technical words—

It designated land that was not included in the building plan of that LRDP, but it was put in reserve for future development. That's what the 2005 LRDP said. So yes, under that LRDP, we couldn't build on that land. But it was put in reserve for future development. And so ultimately, getting ahead of the story, when the regents finally did approve going forward with Student Housing West, they as a part of that approved a modification to our 2005 LRDP to take that land that was held in reserve and allow that to be built on now.

Reti: So you don't have to wait for the next LRDP to be approved.

Blumenthal: No. It is now approved. I might also point out to you that when we did the 2005 LRDP, the land use plan was based on the presumption that we would house 50 percent of our students on campus. The Comprehensive Settlement Agreement provided a commitment to house 2/3 of students above 15,000 on campus. So we modified our commitment for housing, but we did not modify the land use plan.

Reti: Good point.

Blumenthal: So it totally made sense that we would have to do something to modify the land use plan. In certain quarters, that argument, plus two dollars, will buy me a cup of coffee.

Where was I? Oh, okay. So there was the issue of using the land at all and whether it was designated for use, etcetera. And as I say, it's a legitimate argument about viewshed. I don't have a problem with the argument being made, or even about the iconic view of the campus. I think all of that is true. Decision-making on land use is a weighing of multiple factors, of which that is one.

The issue of the colleges, and Student Housing West, which still rankles in certain alumni circles, I believe is a false argument because number one, our colleges, I think are kind of at an ideal size. We might be able to stick another hundred students in a college, or two hundred, even. But it would fundamentally change the nature of the college if we added a pile of students to all of the colleges. Secondly, there's no way to build that. Maybe behind Crown we could do it. But for the other colleges, many of them, we couldn't build more housing in the colleges. Third, there isn't money to build a new college. You could say, "Well, build a new college and put a lot of housing there." But we don't have money to build a new college. There is no opportunity right now today to build a new college.

Reti: Would it be possible to use public-private partnership to build a college?

Blumenthal: That's a fair question. So the question is: could we do a new college with public-private partnership? The answer is yes and no. Yes, we could in principle, in the same way that UC Merced designed the Merced 20/20 plan. The Merced 20/20 plan is a public-private partnership that built academic buildings on the campus. But the Merced 20/20 plan was a remarkably risky project by the university and the approval was a remarkably risky approval by the regents. Let's think about it for a minute. When we build

housing and we take out a loan, or we do something with a partnership to build that housing, we know that we have a source of income that will repay those loans: namely, the rent that students pay to live in that housing.

Reti: You're always going to have demand in Santa Cruz to fill that housing.

Blumenthal: That's right. But once you build an academic building, or a college, or a structure like that using the public private partnership, you still need to be able to figure out how you're going to pay for it.

Reti: So there's no income stream.

Blumenthal: There's no income stream. The only income stream you can use is student tuition or state funding for the university, which is the money that we use to teach classes. So we are risking our ability to actually offer classes if we build something like that using a public-private partnership.

Merced 20/20 did that, and they did that for a couple of reasons. One is the university committed to building Merced. There was no bond money to do this with. The state was refusing to give support. We were already down the road. The campus had opened; we had to do something. And arguably, Merced is still a small fraction of the UC system. So if it all went to hell, yes, we would have to take that money out of teaching resources, but it wouldn't be out of the teaching resources of the campus. It would somehow be socialized within the UC system. So yes, it was a risk, but it wasn't a horrendously bad risk. But to ask the campus at Santa Cruz to take that risk—

Reti: Oh, God, no.

Blumenthal: —would be, okay. I don't even need to go there. That would just simply not work. So that's why we can't build a new college. Now maybe if there's enrollment growth,

we can get the money to build a new college. I would hope that that would be the case. And I've asked the LRDP folks to plan for a new college in terms of the growth of the campus. But we can't do that now because we don't have the resources to do it.

In addition, I would remind you that the housing we're building in the East Meadow is for families. Families currently don't live in the colleges. If they don't live there now, I don't know why you should be upset that they're not going to live there in the future. Secondly, the housing is for graduate students, and graduate students have never been associated with living in the colleges. We have a graduate student housing project on campus that's not associated with a college, and this one would not, either. And the third component, which is admittedly the largest component of Student Housing West, is for upper-division students. Currently on campus we offer a two-year guarantee for student housing. So if you're an entering frosh, you can spend your first two years on campus, if you want. And if you're a transfer student, you get a one-year guarantee. So the only guarantees we offer on campus for upper-division students are the one-year guarantee that we offer for transfer students, and since entering transfer students are a third of the entering students on campus, that's not that many units. So the bottom line is that the vast majority of upper-division students on campus today are not living in a college.

Reti: Wait, okay, so George, I am a little confused here, so help me understand. If we're going to fill these units with upper-division students who are not currently living on campus, how is that going to relieve the housing crisis for the lower-division students?

Blumenthal: We don't have a housing crisis for lower-division students.

Reti: So there's enough beds for all of those students.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: The students who are living in their cars and kind of struggling along—

Blumenthal: I can't speak to living in their cars.

Reti: But I mean the students who can't find a place to live in Santa Cruz that they can afford, those are primarily upper-division students? Because they're kicked out of the dorms and then—

Blumenthal: Yes, we have a two-year housing commitment to entering frosh.

Reti: Okay. So these new units would be aimed at helping upper-division students. And lower-division students wouldn't have a problem because there already is sufficient housing for them.

Blumenthal: Yes. Correct.

Reti: Okay, thank you. I was making sure I understand this whole model well.

Blumenthal: I guess I wasn't explaining it well.

Reti: I don't know. It's not as familiar to me.

Blumenthal: Yes. So that's the bottom line. Lower-division students already have a two-year housing guarantee. We have plenty of housing for our lower-division students. We don't for our upper-division students, almost all of whom have to move off campus currently. The whole idea of Student Housing West's upper-division student component is that those students would be attracted back to campus by more affordable housing.

Reti: I remember from my days as a student, I was unusual in that I lived in the colleges through my junior year. But most students had left campus by the time they were a junior

and lived off campus. They didn't want to be part of a college in a residential sense, even though they were still affiliated with a college.

Blumenthal: Right. Yup.

Reti: So you're saying these are students who are not really committed to living in a college anyway, because they're upper division students.

Blumenthal: That's right. And furthermore, even more importantly, I would argue that we are bringing these students back to campus. They're currently living off campus. So if we bring them onto campus, there's even a greater chance now that they could feel an affinity with their college. They would be physically closer to the college, even if not living in it. They certainly could participate in college activities more easily. And furthermore, there's no reason why the colleges, if they choose to do it, couldn't have programmatic things for upper-division students not living in the college.

Reti: Well, I would imagine that you would have Student Affairs professionals living in those buildings who would be doing some sort of programmatic activities for those students as well.

Blumenthal: Yes, of course. But we could even have those programmatic activities somehow associated with colleges, too, if that made sense. To me, it's worth doing if it makes sense, and it's not worth doing if it doesn't. So I see that as a false argument, the issue of college affiliation. It simply is never going to happen that we're going to build enough colleges to house all of our undergraduate students.

Reti: So why are these arguments being made? Why is the viewshed so important? And what is happening historically at this moment at UCSC that would cause people to really get fired up about these arguments?

Blumenthal: Well, that's a good question, but I think you know the answer when you ask it. In terms of the college system, there's continuing concern among alums that the college system has been undermined, it isn't what it used to be, etcetera; whereas my attitude is yes, the college system is not what it was when the campus opened in 1965. But it hasn't, since the mid-'70s, been what it was when the campus opened in 1965.

Reti: Since reorganization.

Blumenthal: Since reorganization. We've done a lot of work to empower the colleges over the last few years. The role of the colleges is currently in an expanding mode, rather than a contracting mode. So the directionality is right, and it should be the right size. I wouldn't want the campus to go back to what we were trying to do in 1965, not unless we had a huge infusion of cash somehow. So I view that as a nostalgic, but false argument.

With regard to the view, I can understand it. It is an iconic view when you drive up to campus. There's no question about it. But number one, I hate to say this, but every omelet requires breaking some eggs. I shouldn't say that to a vegetarian. (laughter)

Reti: I break and eat eggs. But I'm reminded of Chancellor Sinsheimer's often-quoted remark, "UCSC is not a state park. There's one of those next door. This is a state university established for the good of the people of the state of California to be able to send students here. If you want a state park, go to Wilder Ranch." He would get very cranky about some of these sorts of comments.

Blumenthal: Well, I feel the same level of crankiness like he did, but maybe not quite as much. I don't think I've ever made the state park comment, nor would I, because I think it is valuable to preserve certain natural features of the campus. I think there is value in the East Meadow. I've always been willing to acknowledge the value of that viewshed and that there is an advantage to keeping this iconic view of the campus. I would never deny

that there's value there. To me, it's always a question of weighing one thing over another thing. So I don't think it's an invalid argument. I just think it's one argument out of many. What weight you give that argument depends upon who you are and where you're coming from.

So with regard to the controversies of Student Housing West, I'm really struck by the fact that, in general—I don't want to over-generalize—older alums and emeriti faculty are much more inclined to be very adamantly opposed to using the Hagar site, whereas students and younger alums and younger faculty are generally much more supportive of going forward with the project as it is. There's a real generation difference between constituency groups. That's not surprising, given our history. I understand that. It's real and we have to deal with it. It is awkward in that many of the people who are adamantly opposed to the Hagar site being developed are people who I would normally regard as great friends of the campus. It causes me tremendous anguish to be in an adversarial relationship with people who I've long regarded as great supporters and friends of the campus, and of me personally.

On the other hand, people feel things strongly here. And I do to some extent mind the fact that there seems to be so little willingness to accept that people in the positions of leadership are really trying to act in the best interest of the campus. I think it's fair for people to disagree.

So we've had some really difficult and awkward meetings. Eight or nine months ago we had this really awkward foundation board meeting where I did a presentation on Student Housing West. At their request, we had Sarah Latham come in and do a presentation on Student Housing West. It was an interesting meeting in some ways, and really awkward in others.

Then when it was over, we had a very active discussion. I said—and I wrote down in my [interview outline] notes, “my mistake.” I’m not sure if it was a mistake, but it was an incomplete statement. Which people took as a complete statement. I said that we couldn’t consider bringing a project to the regents that cost more than \$300,000 per bed. That is a true statement. We could not consider going to the regents with a project more than \$300,000 per bed. The mistake was that I should have added that there were additional financial criteria that we would have to meet in order to meet UCOP’s criteria for this project going forward.

Unfortunately, several people took that as meaning if we could just make this 300K number work, then we could come up with a viable alternative. So for example Paul Hall pointed out, quite rightly, that if we were to instead build housing in the parking lot behind Crown College; he reminded me that in 2008 we had brought a project to the regents and that had gotten regental approval to build that housing and we hadn’t gone forward for a variety of reasons. But we did at least get regental approval. So it’s an approved project, even. He also pointed out that if you took the cost of that project per bed and you applied the construction inflationary factors of 2008 to today, that the net result was below 300K per bed. He was right about all of that. But, unfortunately, there were two fundamental flaws in his logic, which unfortunately wasn’t clear at the time. One was that yes, we did have an approved project using 2008 standards. But ADA compliance has changed. Seismic requirements have changed. University policy has changed. For example, it is now university policy that all new construction has to include not just restrooms for men and women, but also restrooms that are gender-neutral. All of those things changed the cost of construction, and so what might have been a cheaper project, even appropriately inflated for inflation, doesn’t take into account the changes in requirements.

The other fallacy in the argument was one that I had not pointed out to him, but probably should have—I think Sarah understood it at the time more deeply than I did—which was that there were other financial criteria. That there's a whole list of them that UCOP, the Office of the President, placed on us. The 300K was just to get it past the regents, but there were criteria that the loan agencies would have to meet, we'd have to meet for them. There were other requirements to keep our credit rating above water. There were other requirements with regard to income per bed, or per dollar that was loaned. There is a whole set of criteria that we had to meet, and we had to meet each and every one of them, not just one.

Reti: So the Crown site would have to meet that criteria?

Blumenthal: Yes. And it doesn't. Well, it could, but not affordably.

Reti: I see.

Blumenthal: So a lot of pushback at that meeting and strong opposition as well from some of our major donors, including Paul, but also the Websters, who have been really opposed to this project. But I have to give the Websters credit. The Websters, I think, have not held it personally against me. I say that because I did call them in to meet with them when I made a decision to retire. I told them kind of first. They had the decency to wince when I said that. (laughter) So I don't think they held it against me.

I didn't retire because of Student Housing West, I might quickly add. But it certainly added to my feeling of unhappiness with regard to my position. It's one of the factors that makes this a less desirable position to hold, just dealing with the all of the intensity of opposition. But it wasn't the issue that did me in. There wasn't a single issue.

Reti: Yeah, I was going to say, I haven't heard you name one single issue that made you want to retire.

Blumenthal: No, this was a holistic decision.

Reti: Sure. That makes sense.

Blumenthal: So lots of people kept saying well, we didn't tell them; this is terrible, etcetera. But we put together an EIR, and we circulated it. And we held, associated with this EIR, a number of public meetings and forums for people both on campus and off campus. One of the awkward issues was that at one of the public meetings—and I didn't attend them personally—but I remember hearing from some folks that were there that there was heckling of some of our students who spoke in favor of the project. I was upset by that because I heard that the heckling came from some of our foundation members. I was upset when I heard this, and I told Alec [Webster] about it. And I will give Alec credit. He and Claudia [Webster] found that there was a video of these sessions. They watched the video and found no evidence of heckling on the video. I believe them. But I also believe that because there was no evidence doesn't mean that it didn't happen.

I made a point of reaching out to the students who had been there. I invited a bunch of them to a breakfast to thank them, and to apologize on behalf of the university for the fact that they may have felt uncomfortable, and to thank them for their support and for their willingness to go public with it. I felt terrible. This is just not the way to do things.

I also, because there were so many complaints that we had a lack of transparency, I made a decision to double the amount of public comment. I extended the public comment to twice its normal length, so that everyone would have plenty of opportunity to weigh in on the EIR and on this project.

Meanwhile, I was asked by our representatives of the opposition, in particular the EMAC [East Meadow Action Committee] organization³⁶⁹ to meet with them to talk about alternatives. Because from EMAC's perspective, any of the alternatives in the EIR were fine. They didn't deny the need for housing. They just didn't like this housing plan. I was certainly happy to explore other alternatives, or other options with them—both the options that we had identified and to invite them to suggest other options. We were not cast in stone at this point. We could very well have changed the project. But I was also very clear. I felt that there were a number of criteria that had to be met for this project to go forward. So if we considered alternatives, those alternatives would have to work.

It was even more complicated by the fact that number one, EMAC was clear from day one that their pathway, if we didn't change our ways, was to sue us. And then secondly, general counsel was pretty clear that there was some information that we could not share publicly at this point in the process. The reason was legal, because we had circulated an EIR and we couldn't provide information publicly about some of the financials of the project, because we were in a competitive business situation with regard to the developer. We couldn't share confidential business stuff. We couldn't share it with the public, and we couldn't share it with the EMAC representatives either. If we were to differentially share material to some people and not others, that would guarantee we would lose a lawsuit. So this was one of those cases where, as far as I was concerned, I didn't have any problems sharing data with regard to the cost of the project or the alternatives. It seems to me: how can you do planning if you can't share that data or see that data? On the other hand, I didn't want to make a step that was going to guarantee that we would lose the later lawsuits. It was an untenable situation.

So we ultimately held two meetings with representatives with the opposition. We invited Frank Zwart there; we invited some members of the foundation board, some alumni, and

representatives of EMAC, to come and meet with us. I attended the first of those two meetings. I didn't attend the second one. Frankly, I didn't think there was a need for me to be there, because there were too many weeds. I wasn't going to crawl around in the weeds on this one.

They wanted to explore other options. We gave them qualitative explanations about why the other options in the EIR wouldn't work financially. They suggested a number of other options that we should consider. They wanted us to consider putting some of the housing down on Delaware Street at our Delaware site. They wanted us to consider building some of this housing in Ranch View Terrace. They wanted us to consider building some of this housing on the—I don't know what it's called, but we own some land on the other side of Empire Grade. That's in addition to the other alternatives we had considered, like Kresge College remote parking and various other things. I think we also included the Crown College stuff. So they did suggest alternatives, which we were happy to explore. But we weren't happy to give them detailed financial data on them at that point.

This all took place during the circulation of the first EIR.

I also reached out to Frank Zwart, and had lunch with him. Frank and I are old friends. I know Frank is opposed to what we did in the meadow. Frank's opposition also includes the fact that we did bring this to the Design Advisory Board, who unanimously recommended against building on the Hagar site. That's true, although I would also say that their role was advisory, not definitive. But in any event, that was, I think, one of the things that motivated Frank. Ironically Frank, I'm told, consulted with Capstone in the early stages of the project, and had even suggested they look at the site. So the reason we're building there may actually ultimately be due to Frank.

Reti: Consulted in a professional sense?

Blumenthal: Yes. They hired him as a consultant to better understand the campus and what options might be available. He did point them in that direction. But I also understand his opposition based upon the Design Advisory Board. That's something that he's very invested in.

So I met with lots of groups. I met with emeriti. I met with the Alumni Council, I met with the Foundation, I met with students. So I met with lots of groups, some of whom were, and remain, strongly opposed. But again, I want to emphasize support from younger faculty and students.

I also want to emphasize support from the community. I think it is amazingly interesting that most people in the Santa Cruz community are supportive of this project, including most of the members of the city council. They won't necessarily come out and say it. (laughs) You know, who wants to be in favor of something the university wants to do? But they do support it, for the obvious reason that this will relieve housing pressure in the community. Even CLUE is supportive of the project. So this project has totally misaligned the opposition to whatever we want to do. That's what made it so challenging and so weird. You know, I've done a lot of things over the years that are either controversial, or which have generated opposition: sometimes loud, sometimes not so loud. And usually that opposition comes from the same people over and over again. You know, it's kind of like: there they go again—certainly not people who I would regard as necessarily in the mainstream of policy-setting for the campus. It hasn't really concerned me very much when groups like that oppose something on campus. However, this particular project has completely cut across traditional lines. Our traditional enemies are sometimes our friends now on this. And our traditional friends are sometimes our enemies on this. I don't mean enemy and friend in a war fighting way. I mean in terms of pursuing the issue.

So this has been a challenge. It has so completely changed the alignment on an issue compared to the traditional way these things work on our campus. That continues to the present day. I don't anticipate anyone will give up on it. I mean, I'm hoping that this project will go forward and survive its legal challenges. I do like to fondly remember—this was way before a time when I had any power to do anything—but I remember when Colleges Nine and Ten were built and to build them, they had to destroy Elfland.³⁷⁰ The curses were on the campus for taking such step. And somehow, we got past that and I don't think most people know what Elfland is anymore. So, for whatever it's worth, I'm hoping we will get past this. If we don't, we don't. I mean, we will see.

But anyway, moving on—so we got comments on the EIR. As I said, I had extended the EIR comment period. We got those comments, we got a lot of comments, hundreds of comments. We read them all; we responded to them all. The plan was originally to reissue one chapter of the EIR in response to those comments, the chapter on alternatives. But I encouraged them to reissue the EIR in its entirety because they did want to make more changes. But even more importantly, I wanted to show that we really were taking seriously the comments that we got.

In the new EIR that we issued, we made a number of changes. For example, on the west side of the campus, we made the buildings less tall. I think the highest storied building in the current version of Student Housing West is seven stories, not ten. I think there's only one seven-story building. The height of that building is something like two feet higher than the highest building in Porter College.

Reti: So how will you accommodate the three thousand students while making the building shorter?

Blumenthal: They made a number of changes in design. They lowered the square footage of the units a little bit and they changed the mix of units to be a little bit more space efficient.

So that was one change that we made. For Hagar, we made some changes as well. They lowered the buildings a little bit in terms of how they were placed on the land. They're two-story buildings. They basically changed the sight lines a little bit, so it's a little bit less disruptive of the view. I knew that this wasn't going to make the people who were unhappy happy, but I think it was certainly moving in a direction to minimize the impact that the project would have. We then reissued that EIR and had a whole new comment period, so lots of opportunity for people to comment along the way. I was very sensitive to that issue because I didn't like being accused of non-transparency.

But I just have to say a couple of things. First, it troubles me that we've been accused of bad faith along the way. There is no bad faith here—not by me, or by Sarah, or by anyone else who has been associated with this project from the university. We're not going to make any money off of this. We have no personal stake in this project being where it is or why it is. Our motivation is that we want a project that gets completed, and gets done, and is buildable, and is usable. So there's no question of bad faith here. You could argue bad judgment, but certainly not bad faith. Although no one's accused me of bad faith, I think others within the administration have been accused of bad faith, and I deeply resent that. You could accuse us of incompetence, that if we were only a little bit smarter, we would have figured out how to make this work, not to build on the Hagar site. And I guess I would say maybe if we were smarter we could have.

The truth is, I would move that project out of the Hagar site in a second if I could figure out a way to do that in a way that maintained affordability. There are several important

design factors that went into Student Housing West. One of those was affordability, to me, perhaps the most important of those, but there were others, as well, in terms of our mission. But the main reason why we didn't build on other sites was affordability issues and the extra cost.

And the cost was there for a reason in these other sites. To have built, for example, in the remote Kresge lot, the fire marshal told us we'd have to build another road because we couldn't build residences that far into the woods without having a second escape route. Another road is expensive. It requires infrastructure. That would have been easy to do if we were building a new college, or a whole big expansion of the campus, because then the cost of the road would be shared. But if we're just building it for housing, the cost would have to be borne by housing. That's an example of the kind of infrastructure cost that's associated with many of the other sites.

Reti: The possibility of having the housing be off campus on the site of the previously industrial site on the west side—do you recall what the issues were there?

Blumenthal: Well, there were several issues in terms of putting it on Delaware Street. Lots of issues. One, the university as part of our Comprehensive Settlement Agreement agreed not to put too much housing in the community of Santa Cruz. Two, that site is within the coastal zone and therefore requires Coastal Commission approval. The counter argument is made, that well, they'll just approve it because if the City Council approves something in town, the Coastal Commission automatically approves it. But university property is different than city property. Legally, we would actually physically have to take it to them to be approved. And my experience with the Coastal Commission is that there is no easy win at the Coastal Commission.

Third, I was concerned because we have other construction that we're doing there to make the Delaware property usable as a genomics center. So we're already doing a lot of construction there. And fourth, because I don't know what the state of the land around that is, and how buildable it is. I would have some concerns about the environmental quality there.

Reti: Because of the fact that it had been used as an industrial site.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So taken together, it just seemed to me from the get-go that was impractical. So we looked at doing it on that spit of land across Empire Grade. We ended up looking at Ranch View Terrace, which I thought was the stupidest idea in the world, because I think we would have, justifiably, had a revolution of our faculty if we had precluded building faculty housing there.

We looked at the southern part of the Arboretum. Some people suggested we simply take the south part of the Arboretum and make it into a project. But there are some environmental issues there that you'd have to encounter.

There's nothing that's easy here, nothing that's easy. There were arguments against each one of those alternatives. Since there are like now thirteen alternatives that we've been looking at, that causes a lot of people to disbelieve it: how can you look at thirteen alternatives and not find a good one? Well, I don't know what to say. (Reti laughs) That's what happened.

But the truth is, I would have moved the Hagar site. I would have had no problem doing that. I did not love having the opposition from the groups that are opposed to that site. And as I said, I'm not without some sympathy, even. But it wasn't practical to do that. At the end of the day, most of the opposition just focused on Hagar and that's, I think, what it is.

Then we had to take it to the regents, which we did three or four times. This was an awkward project to take to the regents. We took it there as a discussion item several times. We took it a couple of times as an action item. The first time we took it, they encouraged us to make it a discussion item instead, or to defer it. Before every regents meeting where it came before the regents, I always had a meeting with Hadi Makarechian, the chair of the Finance and Building Committee beforehand, to go through any issues. Hadi, from day one, liked the project. But as time went on and he was heavily lobbied, particularly by former alumni regents from Santa Cruz, his support for the project eroded, as did that of George Kieffer, the chair of the regents, who was close to Paul Hall, for example. All three of our former alumni regents were opposed to this. I felt like Hadi kept moving the finish line. He was clearly uncomfortable with this project. But I got a sense, eventually, that every time we talked to him he would ask us to do something else and then we would do it. Then he would ask for more. I understand his discomfort, but I also understand that at a certain point, you need to make a decision.

We eventually got to the January regents meeting, where I'd hoped originally we would get approval. But instead, Hadi asked us to arrange a private debate between factions on both sides of the issue. He'd set up this elaborate debate. The idea was that we would have a bunch of alumni who were in favor of the project, and we would have some alumni and others who were opposed to the project. Then I would get a chance to summarize the situation. Well, it turns out I didn't get to summarize anything, because everybody took way too much time, which was okay with me. But we had Paul Hall there,³⁷¹ we had a bunch of people there on both sides. And several regents—Hadi, Lark Park,³⁷² the vice chair of the committee, and George Kieffer, the chair of the regents, were there to hear all of this debate.

Then we did a public debate in public session, between Paul Hall and [someone else] from Santa Cruz. They did a public debate in public session before the regents.

Reti: Is this an unprecedented sort of thing, in your experience? To have a debate like this?

Blumenthal: This is absolutely unprecedented. I have never seen this on any issue, ever, before the regents, a public airing on a debate on an issue coming to the regents. Never. I didn't object to it. But it is unprecedented.

The outcome of that meeting was they asked us for two things. One was to bring it back in March. Hadi had said maybe we could do it between meetings, get an approval. But he said, "No, now March." And then they wanted two things. One was a visualization of what it really all looks like, because the opponents were saying this was going to destroy the view of the entrance to campus. I think the regents all thought this was at the entrance to campus, when in fact, as you know, it's two stoplights in from campus entrance, probably a half a mile from the entrance to campus.

And then, the other thing they wanted was an independent cost analysis, since I was basing the argument of why we had to use this Hagar site based upon the cost of the alternatives. And by the way, one of the costs of the alternatives was finding another place to temporarily put family students during the interregnum period when there was no place to live. We would have had to do some kind of temporary housing of some sort.

They wanted an independent cost analysis of all thirteen alternatives. We went off and did our stuff and came to the March meeting, which had lots of drama. We got to the March meeting and we presented the results of the consultant who came in. We did not hire the consultant, they were hired by UCOP. It was a consultant who had done a lot of work for UC. They analyzed all twelve alternatives to the Student Housing West project,

including Student Housing West, and they basically agreed with our cost estimates on every single one. The opponents continued to say at that meeting in public comment and privately to the regents that the eleven non-Hagar alternatives were all good project alternatives and that we should do it, and the cheapest of those was Ranch View Terrace, and maybe that's what we ought to do. Of course, my response was, if you want a faculty revolution, just say we can't build more at Ranch View Terrace because that's the next faculty housing project.

So we went forward with the meeting. Usually what I've done at regents meetings where we do a presentation like this is I'll do an introduction, turn it over to Marlene [Tromp], who gives a presentation, and then she turns it over to Sarah [Latham]. And if there's time, we turn it over to Peggy to do the final financials. I do believe in a team approach. I think that they should be there at the table. I think for hard questions, they're probably better off answering than I would be. I also think we should share the spotlight.

But Nathan Brostrom was pretty insistent that I do this presentation, to be coherent, etcetera, so I agreed to do it. It didn't go well. Halfway through my presentation, Hadi stopped me and said, "We've heard this all before, so let's move on." I kind of minded it, because I wasn't fast enough to realize that there were one or two things that I really needed to get out there. One of the most important was I wanted to refer to the letter of support that we had gotten from legislators Mark Stone, from Bill Monning,³⁷³ and from Luis Alejo. I was very proud of that letter. It showed something having to do with state and community support for this project. But I didn't think to push that out there.

Reti: But that letter would go into the record anyway, right?

Blumenthal: Yes. It was sent to them, so it is in the record.

So they started their discussion and the discussion didn't go well. Lark Park was a big help in that discussion. She seemed very strongly in favor of it, as was Maria. But we were headed for defeat. It was clear. In fact, I think Ashish passed me a note from behind me saying, "This is going down. We need to be thinking about what plan B is."

I had the presence of mind, however, to remind them that they'd asked us for two things, one of which was the cost analysis, which I'd already presented. But the other one was a visualization. So we showed the visualization, which didn't have sound. It was just a visualization. I started out explaining it as it was going on, and then Peggy took over and I'm glad she did because she understood the visualization. I'd seen it maybe once and she'd seen it a hundred times and was well prepared to do that, so I'm glad she did that.

So they looked at the visualization. What we did is we showed the ride up to campus currently and where that plot of land was. Then we showed a visualization of what it would look like in ten years when it's fully built and whatever is planted around there has grown. That completely changed the discussion. They realized at that point that this wasn't a big deal. This wasn't a desecration of holy land. Yes, it is a project. It's no longer a pristine view of the meadow, or the pasture, or whatever you want to call it. But it wasn't horrible. It wasn't something that was unappealing to the eye. George Kieffer, the chair, said that changed his mind. He was inclined to vote against it, and now he's inclined to vote for it.

So we had a long discussion after that. The upshot of it was that the regents approved the project, subject to a subcommittee that they set up certifying the accuracy of our cost estimates. The subcommittee was Hadi Makarechian, Lark Park, and Michael Cohen,³⁷⁴ the former director of finance for Jerry Brown.

We met with that committee a week or so later. In some ways I didn't know what more we could give them, since we'd already given them an independent estimate. Unfortunately,

the only time they could schedule the meeting was a time when I was on a train between Washington and New York. So I was on this phone call from the train. Fortunately, Sarah and others were on the call. But the bottom line was, they had this discussion and Michael Cohen kept saying, "Well, I don't know how to verify the assumptions that went into these cost estimates." That's true. He didn't know how to verify them. I mean, you can dig down; if you want to spend a month working on this, you can verify everything. But there's a limit to verification. I was feeling like the goal posts were moving again. So the meeting ended without a decision, but that they would meet again. They met again several days later without the campus folks present and they approved it.

So it is now approved. Now we have gotten to the lawsuit phase.

Reti: All right. So, this is Irene Reti. This is May 8, 2019. I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for our 33rd interview together. So today we're going to continue with talking about Student Housing West and the developments since the regents meeting.

Blumenthal: Okay. I think when we last left this saga of Student Housing West, the regents had just given final approval from the board and from the committee of three that they had set up to look at the finances. So we now have formal approval. That instituted a thirty-day period when people could challenge the decision. We have since had two lawsuits that have come in. One lawsuit is from EMAC, the save the East Meadow group. That was not unexpected. The other one I hadn't anticipated. It's from a group with some fancy name, but it's basically Don Stevens, who was one of the leaders of CLUE way back when, and was probably one of the more ideological leaders of CLUE. His lawsuit, which actually has the same lawyer that CLUE used, is interesting. I kind of quickly read through it. It's interesting, because basically the premise of the lawsuit is we have to stop university expansion. This is a project that will enable the university to expand as we know it wants

to do because of the discussions of the LRDP, and therefore this is to stop university expansion. It's a baseless lawsuit. But of course they bring in all kinds of attacks on the EIR. In any event, it was interesting to read the presumptions behind that lawsuit.

Reti: And just to make it clear, this project is to address the current enrollments, not the LRDP- projected enrollments.

Blumenthal: This project was designed, from the outset, to deal with current enrollments. If we didn't grow another student, we felt we needed this project just to house the students that we already have on campus. To the extent that the campus will in the future grow under a new LRDP, that will have its own housing components to house additional students. But no, this is for our current campus.

So we have two lawsuits. We've had lots of commentary. I've heard a lot from people. It's really quite interesting. A number of people who oppose the development in the East Meadow have told me they oppose it, but that they understand the need, and while they disagree with the decision, they respect the decision. Others have been much more explicit. Gary Novack, who used to be the president of the foundation, wrote me a letter saying he was disinheriting UCSC from his will because he's so mad about the meadow. And Steve Schnaidt, who I really have a lot of respect for in Sacramento—he's been a strong, strong proponent of the campus and a strong ally over the years—I saw him at a recent alumni gathering in Sacramento. Steve was wearing a big button, "Protect the Meadow," and he basically said to me, "I'm going to devote every resource I have to stopping the university from destroying the meadow." But he was very friendly to me personally, and very thankful, thanking me for all I'd done as chancellor with perhaps one exception. (laughs)

Reti: Is this frustrating for you?

Blumenthal: Only in the sense that I'm uncomfortable with the fact that this controversy has so cut across traditional controversial lines. People who have normally been my allies are now on the other side. And some people who I've traditionally regarded as being non-allies, for example CLUE, the Coalition to Limit University Expansion, are to some extent in our corner on this because they want to see more housing at UCSC. They want to see more housing on the campus to relieve the housing pressure on the community. It makes me uncomfortable that those lines have shifted. I think a lot of people don't quite understand how those lines have shifted and what some of the implications are.

So this will be interesting to see going forward. The lawsuits, of course, were filed in Santa Cruz. And there was a presumption, certainly at the Office of the President, that any lawsuit filed in Santa Cruz is doomed from a campus perspective because judges elected by the local community will naturally be opposed to the university. That may have been the case throughout much of our history, but I think this one is a completely different story because I think the city of Santa Cruz, including all of its political factions, probably supports the university in this because they want to see more housing on campus. They see this as a way of significantly relieving the housing crisis in town. In fact, they're trying to do some difficult things in town to relieve the housing crisis. Having the university-build housing is a simpler way to accomplish many of the same things. So I think all of the battle lines, so to speak, are changed on this. It's not a battle, but the alliances are different than you would normally have, and I'm not sure everyone really appreciates that.

It's troubling to me when people I've worked with so carefully and so long with over the years feel so frustrated with either me personally, or with the things that I've done lately. I'm sorry about that. But at the end of the day, I've always felt that I had to be principled and I had to do what was the right thing for the university. I'm charged with doing the

right thing for the university, no matter whose ox gets gored. So I don't feel particularly defensive about it. I'm just saddened by it.

Reti: My sense is that some of the opposition is perhaps coming from the place of yes, this project might be fine, and if this was all that was going to be built in the meadow, and that was a promise, that would be fine. But the way in which the LRDP is connected, in their minds at least, to this project is that they see it as the first step to building all over the meadow. So Student Housing West becomes kind of a line in the sand. Do you have a response to that?

Blumenthal: Your question is a good one. Is this the first encroachment on the meadow? When we conceived this project, we had in no way conceived it as the first encroachment of a long-term plan to take over the meadow. This was just a convenient way to build this project and get it done. To me, the LRDP is a completely separate process, completely divorced from this. Having said that, I think it is legitimate for the LRDP to look at to what extent there could be encroachment on the meadow. I don't believe that the plans that they're developing will have any significant encroachment on the meadow. But, what I think is insignificant might be what somebody else thinks is the end of the world. So, who knows?

Reti: Right. I know you and I have discussed the buildability of this campus.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: And the fact that there really aren't that many places we can expand, especially given the issues with the North Campus, and water, and services and so—

Blumenthal: And trees.

Reti: And trees. Right. So then the question becomes: how much can we afford to protect that meadow if that's the only place we have?

Blumenthal: The question you're asking, given the unbuildability of the campus, the fact that so little of the land is actually easily built on, does mean that we have to cast the net broadly and look very broadly at what we might do? There are always going to be trade-offs. There are always going to be things that we will have to give up if we build more on the campus—whether it be trees; whether it be habitat; whether it be the meadow; whether it be building in uncomfortable places, like in ravines. These are things that we have to look at very, very carefully. Theoretically, we could try to shove move buildings into our current footprint. But it gets much more expensive when you try to build in a ravine, or on the slope of a ravine, than on relatively flat land. And that means we wouldn't be able to afford to build the buildings that we might need for the campus.

So there're lots of tradeoffs here. It is not an easy question. There's no one that has an obvious answer. And depending upon what your interests are—if you're interested in trees, you might go one way. If you're interested in the views, you might go another way. If you're interested in getting the most building per buck, you might go a third way. So there is no easy answer to these questions. And then you have to put that all against the backdrop of wanting to have a campus that seems relatively well planned and thoughtfully planned. That's what the LRDP committee is doing. So far as I can tell, they've come up with two fairly decent plans. They've circulated three plans. They got back feedback. Now they're going to come back with two plans that are somewhat different than the three plans that were circulated earlier. I am not a land use planner. This is not going to be my decision. I'm happy to leave this for the next chancellor because I think it should be a decision of the next chancellor (laughs) who we're all calling Pat right now. Pat's a nice name, because it could be a male or a female.

Reti: (laughs) Okay. It shall be revealed by the time we publish this, I'm sure.

Blumenthal: It will be revealed, actually, next Wednesday night. I'll be sending a campus message on Thursday when the regents approve the appointment.

Reti: Yes. Do you have any advice for "Pat" about dealing with these sorts of issues?

Blumenthal: Well, I think "Pat" will be able to make up his or her own mind. I think Pat will have their own opinion. Do I have opinions about how we should proceed on these issues? Yes, I do. I think the two plans that were produced for the LRDP are both fine. Right now as I sit here, if you told me to choose one, I couldn't. I think they both look good. I'd like to hear feedback and commentary. From where I sit, as someone who is not an expert on land use, the two plans look virtually equivalent. To me, it's almost like one plan with two variants. The variations seem to me pretty minor. But what I think is minor, somebody else might think is major.

With regard to Student Housing West, I don't see how any of the issues have changed. "Pat" can decide that we don't want to fight this battle anymore and we're going to back off. That's a decision "Pat" can make. But the consequence is either no housing for students, or housing for students that will take longer because we'll have to start from scratch and it will be significantly more expensive for students. I don't see an alternative between those choices.

Reti: One final question on this. I've heard some people say, "Why does UCSC have to grow? Why can't the UC regents start another campus in the north central valley, or someplace like that, instead of trying to shove more people into a community that already has a housing crisis?"

Blumenthal: It is a fair question to ask why would the UC regents, or really the legislature, ultimately, shove more people into Santa Cruz rather than start a new campus, or put the enrollment elsewhere. So with regard to a new campus, let me remind you that between the decision to start a new campus at Merced, once they made that decision, and the day they opened their doors, was twelve years. Twelve years. So if a new campus is the solution to anything, it's a solution two decades from now. It isn't a solution today. Secondly, with regard to the new campus, unlike Santa Cruz, and unlike Riverside and unlike Irvine and unlike San Diego, all of those campuses were built up in the '60s using state bond money which came to the university through the passage of state bonds. There has not been a state bond since 2006. There is a plan for a state bond in 2020 that would support UC. Even if it passes, it would be a drop in the bucket. And frankly, most of the money from that state bond, I fear, will go towards seismic upgrades. I really want it to go toward enrollment growth money to fund the space that we need already on campuses. So that will be a big battle going forward.

Having said all that: how did they fund Merced? They funded Merced in a project called Merced 2020, which is a humongous public-private partnership, a P3. But it's a P3 different than the P3 that we're using for Student Housing West. In Student Housing West, we're doing a public-private partnership, but we have a well-defined source of income from the project, namely the rents that students pay when they rent their rooms. It's a source of income. On the other hand, in Merced 2020, they're building laboratories; they're building classrooms; they're building offices—they're building academic space. The only source of revenue to pay off those loans ultimately comes from the state funds that support university operations, including tuition.

Reti: It seems that if there's a pent-up demand for all these students, there would be a source of funds: enrollments.

Blumenthal: Yeah, there is a source of funds: tuition or state support. But unfortunately, tuition and state support are both needed just to fund our educational purposes. If you take some of it and pay off buildings, we may have the space then to offer the classes but we won't have the faculty to offer the classes.

Reti: Empty buildings with no teachers.

Blumenthal: So Merced 2020 was a very risky operation, risky because there's no well-defined source of funding. Yes, you could use those sources. But there's no well-defined source of funds that doesn't have another purpose already, number one. Number two, it was doable because Merced is still small; the UC system is huge. If you do something that doesn't make sense with a tiny, teeny weeny little fraction of your operation, you can make it work. But if you try to do something with an increasingly bigger fraction of your operation, that becomes ever more risky. I don't believe that's a viable mechanism to start new campuses going forward. Could it be done once more? Maybe, but I think that would be very, very difficult, and I would not be in favor of going down that route if the state were unwilling to pay the capital costs associated with starting a campus.

Reti: What about the capacity of Merced at this point to take more students.

Blumenthal: So what about the capacity of Merced and Riverside and San Diego, etcetera? Yeah, they do have capacity there. I think that there's an interest in making sure that there is space at all campuses. Note that even Berkeley has been forced to take additional students over the last few years, even though they say they're full up. Even UCLA has been forced to take additional students, even though they say they're full up. So it shouldn't be a huge surprise to you that Santa Cruz is being forced to take additional students. Is it possible that through legal issues, like a failure to get an LRDP approved and through the court, that Santa Cruz might be limited? Yeah. But I don't believe for a

minute that the president would want that to happen. I don't believe for a minute the regents would want that to happen. And at some level, I don't believe for a minute that the legislature would want that to happen either, because everything that they've done has been to increase enrollments. Is it a fair question to ask whether or not enrollments could go elsewhere? Absolutely, it's a fair question to ask. But I think it's an unrealistic question. I think that's just not going to happen.

Reti: Yeah. Well, I ask these questions because these are questions that people on the street are asking.

Blumenthal: No, no, I totally understand. I'm totally okay with your asking them.

What else did I want to say about Student Housing West? Presumably we will enter into some settlement discussions with lawsuit groups. I am skeptical that there is a settlement out there. If it was just EMAC, I might imagine that might be possible. But I am very skeptical that that will work. Then we'll have to see. It will either have to play out or whatever. We're prepared to fight an injunction. I think we have a good case because we've been so responsive in preparing the EIR. We knew lawsuits were coming, so hopefully we did this in a way that protected us as best we could from fights over the EIR. But who knows? In the legal realm, anything can happen. We even set it up in a way that we could get financing for this and move it forward, even if we are under a lawsuit.

On the other hand, it's going to depend on whether the Office of the President and the next chancellor have the desire to move this forward. It will be up to them. It would be a disappointment to me if this project doesn't go, because I've devoted a lot of effort to it. I've devoted a lot of psychic energy to it. On the other hand, if that's the decision that's made, that's the decision that's made. My job was to create an opportunity to do the right thing for our students. I hope my successors follow through on that.

Santa Cruz Works and the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

I started having some discussions with Bud Colligan³⁷⁵ a few years ago. Bud is a former Silicon Valley entrepreneur who moved to Santa Cruz with his wife and became very interested in Santa Cruz and developments at UC Santa Cruz. So he and I started talking about things, and what Santa Cruz was lacking and what things might work. He came to see me and we had those discussions. Then he started being very helpful to us, because he started working with David Haussler, to help David develop the case for genomics. His feeling was that Haussler and his group were doing super fantastic things, but that the way they presented it didn't convey the level of excitement that it deserved to the general public, in particular, the potential funders. So, Bud devoted a fair amount of time to working with David and his group. I remember seeing some of the presentations that they developed. He did a great job with them.

Then I saw Bud additionally on trips. There is an annual trip from Santa Cruz to some other city in the US with similar populations and facing some of the same issues that the city of Santa Cruz has. City officials go on that trip every year, with some community members, some members from the university, etcetera. I've gone on, I think, two or three of those trips. I went to the one to Boulder, and I went to the one to Santa Barbara. There were a few others that they've done, which I didn't attend. There are scheduling issues, etcetera. But I did go on a couple of them. And on one of those trips, I believe it was the trip to Santa Barbara, but I'm not 100 percent certain, Bud and I had a chance to have some much more extensive discussions. He tried to learn from me the workings of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group and how it works, since I was board member and I was very invested in SVLG. I was actually quite surprised at how little he knew about SVLG, so I talked to him about that. I also talked to him about Joint Venture Silicon Valley, and how those organizations had been a benefit to their respective places.

That led Bud to take on two major projects locally. One was something called Santa Cruz Works, which is an effort to publicize the business opportunities within Santa Cruz. He put together a group. He asked the university to participate, which we did, setting up advertising and websites and information for businesses that might be interested in locating in Santa Cruz, to understand some of the advantages of this location. That was Santa Cruz Works, which I think is still going strong.

Reti: What an excellent idea. I didn't know about that.

Blumenthal: And then the other was to form MBEP, the Monterey Bay Economic Partnership. His idea was to set up something like, but not exactly the same, as the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. First of all, he had to define the area. He defined the area as the three-county area of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. He wanted to, like the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, engage membership that were well beyond a relatively small board. So he wanted to invite companies, cities, to join; county governments to join, nonprofits to join. He wanted this to be an inclusive organization. I think SVLG is a little bit less inclusive. For example, I don't think any municipal or county governments are in SVLG. Yes, universities are. But not school systems. I think Bud wanted to be much more inclusive, but he definitely wanted to have businesses involved, because that was going to be the core of what MBEP was about.

Then he set up a board. He wanted the board to reflect the geographical breadth of the three counties. He wanted it to represent the conceptual breadth of the membership and its businesses, institutions of higher education, nonprofits, government entities. So he set up a board and he asked me if I would agree to be a founding member of the board, which I agreed to do. I'm now in my second term on the board. It's got a two-term term limit. But I am resigning from the board, effective my resignation as chancellor. It seems to me

that it really doesn't make sense for me to serve on the board. I recommended that the next chancellor be invited to serve on the board in my place, and perhaps to fill out my term or however they want to do it. I think that would be an appropriate thing to have happen. He invited me to stay, but it just didn't make sense for me to do that.

So what do they do? Well, they've done a number of things. They've sponsored internships. With the help of the Santa Cruz Foundation and MBEP, we set up an internship website in Santa Cruz for use by students of both Cabrillo College and UCSC so that companies could go to one site and advertise potential internships that are available in the community. And MBEP was really the driving force behind it. The organization is now built up. It has a number of employees. Kate Roberts³⁷⁶ is now its president. She's fantastic. She really makes it work. Bud has now gone off on a six-month holiday, I think, was it to Italy? I forget where he went. But that doesn't make it stop because he's now just a board member. He's not the key player anymore, and that's exactly what he wanted. Kate has been fantastic. She's put together an excellent staff and she's shown a lot of energy. She is the Santa Cruz version of Carl Guardino, who's the president of the SVLG. And she is, as I say, exceptionally good.

They've also been advocates of high-speed internet service to the tri-county area. We've been a key player in that because we were the ones who were key to getting the additional dark fiber service to Santa Cruz County.

Reti: Right. We did talk about that.

Blumenthal: Yeah, and it's funny, because on that front, I had lunch the other day with Mary Doyle. There's two Mary Doyles. This is the Mary Doyle who used to be the vice chancellor of IT.³⁷⁷ Mary told me that they still haven't finished it yet. They're just about there. But she was kind of surprised at how long it ended up taking because it started

under her tenure. It's not our fault, I might add. It's not UCSC's fault. It's the fault of the providers.

Anyway, they've been involved in high-speed internet service. They've rented space from us at MBEST and have used that space for offices, because it's kind of central to the three counties. So they used some of the space at MBEST.

But the main things that they've been working on at MBEP are housing, transportation, and workforce. So for housing, they have this fund, the Monterey Bay Housing Trust. That provides seed funding for housing projects and seed funding for loans, seed loans.

Reti: Housing projects for who?

Blumenthal: People.

Reti: Oh, so even private individuals?

Blumenthal: For private individuals because housing is a big issue in all three counties. They've been involved in a number of projects over the last couple of years, probably at least a half dozen projects in three counties that they've helped get off the ground. I think that's quite impressive. On transportation, they were strong supporters of a bond measure in Santa Cruz County. I know Bud and the group have also supported a somewhat more controversial move, although it's probably the right move, arguing that the right of way that was to be a train plus bike path should just be a bike path. Their argument is it's not viable to do both. I'm not sure a train will ever be viable in our children's lifetimes. But that's another whole story.

Reti: That's another huge, controversial land use planning debate around here.

Blumenthal: Well, I know it's a big controversy, but I don't think that there's a ridership that would support a train. I think it would be great for workers in Watsonville to be able to take a train to Santa Cruz. I think that would be fantastic. But it couldn't be done in a cost-effective way. Bud's point is that it's also not realistic to have them share the right of way. But that's another consideration. I think Bud is right, but I realize it's highly controversial, and there are people who strongly disagree with that perspective.

And then workforce. They've done a lot in terms of workforce training and workforce development in the tri-county area. MBEP has really been like SVLG in terms of being involved in those kinds of issues that are crucial to economic vibrancy of the area. I know they work well with Bonnie Lipscomb³⁷⁸ in Santa Cruz and with the equivalent people in the other counties. Somehow, so far they've been able to transcend local politics. It has been wise to involve some local political leaders, but they haven't involved, so far as I can tell, the controversial ones. And somehow, local disputes in Santa Cruz, of which there are many now over housing issues, or local disputes in Monterey, which are almost beyond number sometimes, (laughs) somehow haven't impeded the work of the group. I know relatively little about San Benito County politics.

Reti: Well I think it's really interesting, I think we should say for the reader who perhaps might not be aware, that historically there has been a real division between Santa Cruz and Monterey. Recently I went whale watching and they were talking about the Monterey Bay Canyon as something that divides Monterey and Santa Cruz County from each other. Symbolically, I think there's a canyon as well. UCSC has historically looked much more towards the north and the Bay Area, Silicon Valley, and not, in my knowledge, forged those relationships with the Monterey Bay area. So this is exciting to hear about.

Blumenthal: I think that's true. And if I could just comment on your comment.

Reti: Yes, please.

Blumenthal: I think your comment is correct. I've gone to Monterey on a number of occasions to give talks on what's going on at UCSC, why you should be interested at UCSC. And it has always surprised me how little people in Monterey County really understand what's going on at UC. They're much more invested in CSUMB. The level of ignorance has always surprised me. I think people are interested when you engage them. They've never been a major fundraising center for us. We've never gotten much fundraising there, although we've tried. I think it is true that our focus has always been northward. That's been the big complaint of FORA [Fort Ord Reuse Authority] folks, that our focus is so northward, rather than toward the south. But again, there're logical reasons for that. There're a lot of businesses establishing themselves in Silicon Valley all the time and we have struggled to get businesses interested in coming to Fort Ord, I mean, businesses from the outside, other than service things, you know, hamburger joints. So I think it's a serious issue. I think that MBEP is a great way of bridging this gap.

The other board member from UC Santa Cruz is Gary Griggs. Gary and I are a great combination because one of the few things that we do exceptionally well in terms of collaboration with Monterey County, is on marine sciences and coastal sciences. That collaboration with many different institutions around the Monterey Bay crescent is something I think we should be extremely proud of. I think Gary deserves a great deal of the credit for that. So that serves as an example we can strive toward in other areas.

The Three Plus Three Program

Okay. Let me talk a little bit about the Three plus Three program at Santa Cruz. First of all, what is a Three plus Three program? A Three plus Three program—and there are a few of them around the country—allows a student to go to an undergraduate school for

three years and then transfer to a law school. After their first year at law school, they get their bachelor's degree from the undergraduate school. Then two years later, they get their law degree. So the program allows the student to get a law degree in six years after high school, rather than the typical seven, which would be four years of college and three years of law school.

Usually Three plus Three programs are at an institutions, like McGeorge is associated with the law school associated with the university in Sacramento. They usually do it that way. But Kelly had an idea: why not do this with UC Santa Cruz and Hastings? It was at a time when this was going to be very advantageous for Hastings. Hastings was seeing dropping demand for their slots, so this was a way of increasing it, increasing the number of Californians, and increasing the number of underrepresented students at Hastings, or first generation students because Santa Cruz has an abundance of first generation students. Kelly had always wanted to do something for the campus, something that would be hers. Unlike many spouses of chancellors, she certainly couldn't devote the time to Santa Cruz that many spouses could. But I thought it was a really good idea and it had really strong support from the dean at Hastings, Frank Wu, at the time. His own research was on diversity and the law, so he was very much interested in increasing diversity.

So Kelly got together with a bunch of people here: Craig Haney,³⁷⁹ Sheldon Kaminiecki, and a few others, to see whether or not they could design the program. They put together a working group. That group worked up a proposal. There was a lot of interest at Hastings in having this not just at UCSC, but at other campuses as well.

So Kelly was appointed the director of Three plus Three programs at Hastings. The work group finally came up with a proposal. It didn't take that long. Then it went in for approval. Herbie Lee was really helpful in making sure that we knew all of the "T"s to

cross and “I”s to dot. They came up with a program where a student would have to complete their general education requirements and their major in three years, so that the only thing really lacking was the full number of credits. Under those circumstances, they could get into Hastings. After their first year at Hastings, their first year of courses would count for credit at UCSC and allow them to graduate, and they got around whatever residency requirements there were for the last year. It was easily approved by the senate committees here.

Interestingly enough, a similar proposal was made at Riverside because there were some people at Riverside that were interested. Kelly was working with them to do something like the Santa Cruz experience. But at Riverside they decided that it needed approval from the Office of the President. When they sent it up to the Office of the President, the Office of the President started asking all these questions. But in fact, Herbie was right. It did not need Office of the President approval because it was for UC an undergraduate program. The only thing that needs approval from the Office of the President are graduate programs. Hastings itself is quite independent of the Office of the President; Hastings doesn't live under the regents, even though it is called UC Hastings. So there was no need to get OP or regental approval of this because it's not a graduate program, from a UC perspective. It's only an undergraduate program. So it was interesting that UCR got themselves caught up in this knot of trying to figure out how to make it work, when in fact it was much simpler, and they just wouldn't take our word for it.

But Herbie knew the rules backwards and forwards and he made sure that it went through smoothly. The program didn't take that long to put into place. I thought it was a great idea. My view was that it would be of great benefit to first generation students. I think one of the first students that wanted to use it was somebody who was going to break a mold, because it was a transfer student. They had not even conceived of transfer students being

eligible for it. So the first question was, would a transfer student be eligible. I think the answer was yes, if after a year at Santa Cruz they qualified based on those criteria, then yes, they would qualify. I think the first student to successfully do this was a transfer student who's now long since graduated.

For some people, this was a great program and a great success. But, it had too few successes. The reason it had too few successes was multifold. Of the students who were interested and who wanted to go do it, versus the number who successfully did it, the successes were a very small fraction, mostly because all of them didn't get into Hastings. Hastings had to admit them. There were a couple of dynamics going on there. One has to do with the LSAT, the law school admissions test. All law schools require the LSAT, although now a couple are backing off. But basically all law schools require the LSAT. We can have a nice discussion about whether or not the LSAT is really predictive of success in law school or not. But irrespective of whether it's predictive or not, the law schools require it and they pay attention to it, because law schools are ranked, and one of the important factors going into the ranking of law schools are the average LSAT test scores of their entering class. So the LSAT is important and our students were not doing that well on the LSAT, particularly first-generation students, because they were not taking LSAT prep courses.

Reti: Oh. Because those are very expensive.

Blumenthal: Because they're very expensive. So the first thing Kelly did was she had lots of conversations with the Stanley Kaplan folks. She had a lot of conversations with them and she got a deal whereby if enough students would sign up for an offering, they would actually give a major reduction in cost, but not zero. The problem there was that they only offer that preparation at certain times of the year. A lot of Santa Cruz students,

for example, aren't here in the summer, so they can't easily do it during the summer. And in the fall, they've got other classes that are going on. This is a very intense program.

So she tried that for a while, with very limited success. Then she got the idea of offering a class at Santa Cruz that was an LSAT preparation course. So she got together some money. The spouses of the chancellors have a small budget that they can expend every year. Hers was one of the smaller ones. But she took money out to hire a guy from USF [University of San Francisco] to come down every week to teach a class on LSAT preparation. He was doing it at USF and very successfully. So he came down to do it and he's still doing it.

Then she got some money from some donors to help pay for this as well. Even though I'm stepping out, she's kind of set aside a little bit of money so that we can offer it again next year for students. That has helped a little bit, so a few more students have gotten in.

But the LSAT was only one of the issues. The other issue is, Frank Wu, who I think really saw the advantage of this, stopped being dean at Hastings. The new dean was much less supportive of programs like this. In addition, Hastings has been degrading both their financial aid and their LEOP program, their law EOP program, so they have fewer first gen and fewer underrepresented groups coming into the law school. Again, that affected whether or not Santa Cruz students could easily transfer.

So, was this successful or a failure? It was neither. There have been a number of students who have successfully done this and I'm very pleased about that. But the numbers are far fewer than we had hoped for. I had hoped for ten or twenty a year. And it's been a handful of students per year, at most. So it was both a success and a failure, if I could use those terms.

Ultimately legal studies hired a new director. She came in and had many demands on her time and resources. Unfortunately, because the throughput of this program wasn't very

high, I don't think it's gotten a very high priority from legal studies. Craig Haney thinks it's great, but he's only one voice, and he did step down as the director of legal studies. Another issue is advising and making sure students are being appropriately advised. Kelly has been a trooper. She came and did advising at all ten colleges for several years in the fall. And she did advising for transfer students. She actually came in and, during the first week of registration, did a fair amount of that. She also arranged trips to Hastings for the students during the year so they could at least see what they were signing up for. There were some law school organizations she worked with. So she's done a fair amount of that. But again, it's disappointing we haven't had more students.

I think that they need to wake up a little bit at Hastings. I think the fault lies with Hastings, not with Santa Cruz. And to the extent that Santa Cruz feels like backing off a little bit, it's only because the results haven't been as impressive as I'd hoped.

Reti: That's too bad.

Merging UCSC and Hastings Law School?

Blumenthal: So speaking about hopes, in the course of discussions with Frank Wu,³⁸⁰ who I actually have a lot of regard for, it soon became clear to me from talking to him that Hastings was in deep trouble, and he knew that. Hastings is now the last freestanding research law school in the country. Let me repeat that. The last freestanding *research* law school in the country. "Research" meaning where they expect faculty to publish. And "freestanding" means not associated with the university. So Hastings is quite unique in that regard. Their financial situation has become bleaker over the years, to the point where when a few years ago, when the discussions I'm about to describe took place, they were losing about a million dollars a year, steady state, as a structural deficit.

Reti: And remind me—UC Hastings, I think we talked about this a little bit a few interviews ago—but they're not supported by the university financially?

Blumenthal: They're not supported by the university. They're not run by the university. They have a completely separate board of trustees from the UC regents. Officially, Janet Napolitano is the president of them as well as everybody else, but that's titular. They do participate in UCRS and things like that. But other than that, they're completely financially independent. They may be within the state's UC budget, but they're a specific line item in the state budget. So they don't have a deep relationship with UC. When I was chair of the senate, systemwide, I tried to get them included in the faculty home loan program. UCOP was perfectly willing to do that, but Hastings wasn't, (laughs) which I think they later regretted. So they have this independence.

Anyway, Frank felt this was not sustainable, so we started talking about the possibility of a merger. What if UC Santa Cruz merged with Hastings? First of all, from UC Santa Cruz's point of view, it would give us a law school. It would give us a toehold in San Francisco. It would really round out the curriculum. We have a strong legal studies program and it would be synergistic with that. They're strong in environmental law at Hastings. That would fit well with our environmental studies programs. I saw some really huge advantages to that.

From Hastings' perspective, they do things as a very small, freestanding organization, which they need not do. For example, they have a registrar. There's no reason a law school has to have a registrar. Berkeley Law doesn't have a registrar; they use the campus registrar. They do the registration through the campus system. Payroll—there's no reason to have a separate payroll system at Hastings. If they were part of UCSC, they would just be a small addition to our payroll system. In other words, what I'm suggesting is if there

really were a merger, then I think enough money would be saved in the merger to make up for the structural deficit that Hastings was running.

Reti: Hmm. And it wouldn't put an undue burden—well, obviously it didn't happen—but it wouldn't have put an undue burden on Santa Cruz?

Blumenthal: I certainly thought it was worth exploring. Nothing would ever happen without careful financial due diligence. But I thought as a concept, it made sense. I thought it kind of worked out on the back of the envelope calculations. In fact, I thought it was a winner for both sides. I think we would save far more than their structural deficit. So I thought it was a real possibility.

So it was arranged for me to go meet with the faculty at Hastings. I came and talked to the faculty at Hastings about a possible merger. It was a very lively discussion. (Reti laughs) Hastings is such a strange place because shared governance virtually doesn't exist there. And, of course, one of my arguments was gee, we'd have real shared governance as a part of the UC Academic Senate. That may have been a negative.

Reti: (laughs) Talk about culture clash, right?

Blumenthal: But in any event, it was a very lively discussion. It was clear that at least half of the faculty would have strongly supported that. But I knew from the beginning that the issue wasn't—I mean, faculty would be an issue—but I actually thought the faculty would have gone along with it, would have been okay with it, had we moved it forward. The real issue was the board of directors, the board of trustees, because essentially there's no way we could do a merger without them losing their authority, and right now, they run the place. They have the same authority to Hastings that the regents have to UC. But there's no way we could fundamentally merge with two different overlords.

Wu was really strong that we needed to do this—or something else—that Hastings was not on a pathway to success long term. So their board of trustees did the obvious thing. They fired him. (laughter) Now they have someone in there who is doing some very risky things, which might pay off and might do well for them. If they don't, I think Hastings is doomed.

Reti: So how long ago did these conversations about merging take place?

Blumenthal: Five years ago.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: It was very, very interesting. Again, I thought from the beginning it was a longshot. I even put our campus counsel onto the task of trying to figure out how we would do this legally and who had to approve it. I even discussed it with Janet Napolitano, who was strongly in favor of it. She said, "If you can pull this off, this would be great!" I couldn't pull it off.

Reti: It's very creative, that's for sure.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I thought it was, too.

An Honorary PhD from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Okay. So, let me do the honorary degree. So one day, kind of out of the blue, I got a letter informing me that the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, was going to give me an honorary PhD. It was a complete and utter surprise and completely out of the blue. It was an honorary PhD in Astrophysics and Leadership in Higher Education.

Reti: Oh. Okay. Right. You already have your PhD. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But I was kind of shocked. It really was out of the blue. I knew nothing about it. And in fact, it was no small matter. I only learned later exactly how this had come about. Bob Greenler, who was a professor of mine—and he was the guy I worked on sun pillars with—Bob had stayed there all those years at Milwaukee, retired from Milwaukee, and then moved to Madison, but he kept his contacts. I think it was his idea. And it turns out that in Wisconsin, you have to treat this as though it's an academic promotion, or hiring. You have to do letters of recommendation. You get all kinds of information together, put together a file. Of course, I knew none of what was going on. Then it had to go to the board of regents at the University of Wisconsin system to be approved. It was kind of amazing that all of this took place, and I had not a clue. But anyway, they awarded me an honorary PhD.

Reti: Fabulous.

Blumenthal: I was impressed because I had never even imagined getting an honorary PhD. My friend, Arthur Levine, who I may have mentioned in these sessions—Arthur has a bunch of honorary PhDs. I was once kidding him about how envious I was that he had all these honorary PhDs. He said, “It’s not a big deal. My field is higher education. So what do you think? Of course I’m going to get honorary degrees all over the place.”

Anyway, I was really pleased. So I went to Milwaukee to receive my honorary PhD. It was really a nice trip. I asked Ashish to come with me. I figured he has to do a lot of crummy things, so I can invite him to come do something nice.

I stayed in downtown Milwaukee. I hadn’t seen downtown Milwaukee for many years. Let me back up and say that since my father died and I went back for his funeral, and then went back to visit my mother a month or two later—since that time, I’d been in Milwaukee a total of once since my graduate student days, and that one time was when my mother

died. We took her body back to Milwaukee for burial, so she could be buried next to my father. But that was the only time I've been in Milwaukee since being a graduate student.

So it was quite a revelation to me. First, downtown, which was kind of the first thing I saw—that's where I was staying—it had been completely revitalized. It was quite impressive. It reminded me a lot of Minneapolis, which had been revitalized twenty-five years earlier. They did a very nice job in downtown Milwaukee. It's quite an interesting place now.

One night while I was there we had dinner with the deans of the various colleges. It was kind of cool. I did go to the campus and wandered around the campus. I was shocked. I didn't recognize anything. It was all different. It was so built up. Even the brand-new physics building that I had helped everyone move into—I almost couldn't even find it anymore. Now it's one of the older buildings around. (laughs) I couldn't find anything. It was so built up. It was like a maze. It was like a concrete maze of stuff. I do feel that way a little bit in parts of the UCSD campus. Even at UCSD, there are parts of the campus I can find my way around pretty well. But in Milwaukee, *nothing* was familiar to me. It looked like a completely alien place.

It was fun. I got to meet with some students. The students there are very well behaved and respectful, which was so hard for me to get used to. (laughter) I met with the president, who is a really fine guy. I was quite impressed with him. I thought they were really going to go places. He was relatively new there. It turned out the next year he left to go to Marquette University, so that didn't last.

I gave the graduation speech for their graduation. I've been giving a lot of graduation speeches. I gave one here. I'm giving another one next month, at the graduate graduation. So I really put a lot of effort in on that graduation speech, as I think did Jennifer McNulty.

We really worked that one over. I was quite proud of it. I talked about what higher education was like in the United States, how it's evolving, how the graduates should be grateful for the support they get to achieve higher education, and why it will be important for them for years to come to continue to support higher education for the students who come later. That was the theme of the talk. I sprinkled it with lots of anecdotes. I was really proud of it. One of the people on stage for the graduation came up to me as I was leaving. He said, "I've been to graduation ceremonies for fifty years. That was the best speech I've ever heard."

Reti: Maybe we can put it in the appendix, if you want.³⁸¹

Blumenthal: Yeah. Absolutely.

Reti: I think that would be great. Because the thoughts on higher ed, I think, are relevant beyond Wisconsin, for sure. They certainly apply here.

Blumenthal: Then one thing struck me at this graduation ceremony where they actually handed me the honorary degree. Students were so well-behaved! And serious. It was like being in the Catholic Church where you get communion. Everyone was serious as they walked up to get their degree and diploma. Nobody had written stuff on their robes or hats. It was all so somber and serious.

Reti: (laughs) Interesting.

Blumenthal: It was such a difference from what we have here, where students are totally rambunctious. They do whatever they want. In a way, I much prefer our graduations. But I was taken aback. I said, that must have been me then. I mean, I didn't go to graduation, so I didn't know what it was, but it was quite an experience.

The next day I had a lunch meeting with the entire physics department. That was also really sobering in some ways because there was nobody left from the days when I was there. They were all gone. But it was even worse than that. After I left, they'd hired this young guy who did interesting work on relativity and cosmology. So I'd followed his career over the years. And he had just retired. (laughter)

Reti: Oh, lord! Father Time going back to Wisconsin.

Blumenthal: It was so funny because I thought of him as this young guy doing interesting stuff. And he's still an interesting guy, but now he was an old guy doing interesting stuff. It did make me feel quite old to see that. (laughs) I didn't know most of the people. There were a couple of young astronomers that they hired who I thought were really dynamic and who were going to be successful. And so far as I can tell, they have been quite successful there. So I think that was a really good thing for them. They're a dynamic place that's moving up in the world, as they have been ever since I was there. They still aren't Madison, but I think they're quite a legitimate Tier 1 research university.

When all the official things were over, I took half a day and I drove around downtown and to the west side of Milwaukee. I went to my high school, which was really depressing, because it was so rundown and the neighborhood had become so bad. My brother-in-law used to live kind of across the street from the high school. I went to his old house. I was going to take a picture of his house and show it to him. When I got to the house, it was so dilapidated and rundown. There were people that were kind of crowded in. I thought it would be so depressing, I didn't even take a picture of it to show to him.

Reti: Is your parents' business still there?

Blumenthal: I think I looked for it and didn't find it.

The Science and Engineering Library

Reti: So today is May 17, 2019. And this is Irene Reti and I am here for my 34th session of the oral history that Chancellor Blumenthal and I are doing together on this rather cold May day. We're back to winter again.

Blumenthal: Mm hmm. "Winter is coming."³⁸²

Reti: Yes, indeed. Although summer didn't happen yet. (laughs) So George, we were going to start today by talking about the Science and Engineering Library.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I think that's useful. And if you don't mind, I'll give a little bit of history of the Science and Engineering Library.

Reti: Yes, please.

Blumenthal: So when the campus was established, it was already established from the beginning that there was a desire, not just to have a natural sciences division, but a school of engineering as well. And so the idea was to build a Science Library separate from what became known as the McHenry Library, the main library on campus. The first Science Library was located on Science Hill. It had an interesting beginning, because it was supposed to house the collection for a 27,000-student campus which had science and a school of engineering *and* was also going to house the famous Lick Observatory library. They were going to move that down from Mount Hamilton.

So they designed the Science Library. And then one of the astronomers who'd been on Mount Hamilton before they all moved to Santa Cruz—his name was Stan Vasilevskis; and he was famous for his work in astrometry, so he was somebody who measured precise positions of stars—Stan was in charge of moving the Lick collection down. He was adamantly opposed to the design of the Science Library because it turns out that they had

designed that library based upon a presumed number of foot shelves that were needed to house what was needed for the campus. Stan did something very simple-minded. He simply took a ruler and measured how many shelf feet of space the existing Lick collection occupied, and found that it actually would completely fill the new Science Library.

So they didn't change the design, but they put in both a basement where there were books stored, and they also put in a mezzanine, sort of a floor between the first and second floor, which also had bookshelves. It had a very low ceiling, which was problematic for me. So they kind of took a two-story building and made it into a four-story building, after the fact.

That Science Library was not well-designed. It didn't have water, for example. So if you worked in that library and you had to go to the bathroom, you actually had to go to Nat Sci II, which meant that you had to go outside, which meant that if it was raining, you got wet if you went to the bathroom.

Reti: I remember it. I was a student here and we still had that library. Yes, it was very unpleasant. It was always hot and crowded.

Blumenthal: That's right.

Reti: Yeah, and no bathrooms.

Blumenthal: So of course the library was virtually full from the first day the library opened. The campus may have had three thousand students then. It was fine for a few years. From the astronomy perspective, it was great because there was actually a way to get from Natural Sciences II to the Library's astronomy reading room. There was a door there. So we could actually go in after hours, and the library was really kind of cool. That wasn't a public walkway, so no one else could use it. I don't think even the library staff

had access to that route. So it was useful for us, but it wasn't really useful for the rest of the campus in that regard.

Eventually it was realized we needed to build a new Science Library. And eventually the funds were obtained to do that. The new building was built. I don't know, sometime in the '80s, maybe. A much more modern building was built that housed the collections and did very well. I think it was a great addition to the campus, and I think it did many, many good things.

Ironically, what I still tend to regard as this new, modern Science [now Science and Engineering] Library is now thirty-some years old. So it isn't the new modern Science and Engineering Library anymore, even though I sometimes think of it that way. And there are some real issues. Some of the issues are the standard issues you get when you have an old building, namely, electric issues, issues with computer connections, stuff like that, which really weren't envisioned at the time the building was built. But there are other issues as well, which have more to do with issues of the campus writ large. Namely, we are a campus that has no student union, no centralized space for students to sit or socialize or go to, other than their dorm rooms. And so even McHenry Library has taken on a little bit of the role of a central meeting place, a central interaction place, a central study place. So our McHenry Library, in particular, but I would say libraries in general on university campuses have more and more taken on this role of being a place where students go, and study, or socialize, or interact, or get tutored, or whatever, much more than they ever did before. Back when I was a student, the library was where you went to study and where they had lots of books and journals. I don't think we see libraries quite the same anymore. Libraries—yes, they are repositories of journals and books. But so many things are now online or available from repositories somewhere, that the idea of big, dusty bookshelves filling a library is not quite the same image as what we had before.

All change is hard. And this change, for some members of the university community, has been particularly hard, particularly some faculty, particularly older and emeriti faculty. And in particular, the Science and Engineering Library, where we are now converting one of the floors into a new kind of modern space, is another example of that. But it is an example that led to some controversy on campus.

So again, I need to give a little bit of background. Almost since I arrived, every year the faculty in the sciences at least would get a memo saying, “Here’s a list of journals, and here’s a list of books. We’re thinking of moving these into the main library, away from the Science Library, because there isn’t enough space. If you have any objections, check off the ones you object to.” We’d get that every year. Some years I’d fill it out, some years I’d just count on whoever really cared to fill it out. So that wasn’t an unusual thing to be happening in the sciences.

On the other hand, with the conversion, the understanding that we were going to convert a lot of space that currently holds books to student space, basically—a few years ago, it was realized that a lot of books and journals would have to be removed from the Science Library. So the library circulated to the deans and to the department chairs, and I believe also to the senate Library Committee, a list of potential books that would be removed from the library. And what they didn’t do was circulate that list to all faculty. They counted on the departments figuring that out. In retrospect, that was a mistake. But it wasn’t an egregious mistake. It wasn’t a malicious mistake.

Reti: And when you say, “remove from the library”—

Blumenthal: I was going to get to that. Some of the books, for example, may have been moved elsewhere. But some of the books, for which there were copies available, were basically shredded and destroyed. Of course, the image of book shredding or book

burning calls up all kinds of negative metaphors that you can think of, obviously. This incident became a cause *célèbre*, which sadly persists to this day. There are people who will not ever let that issue go. There is some validity to the issue that, in retrospect, I wish we had circulated the list to all faculty and given them a chance to weigh in on it. I probably would have been happier had we had a big book sale rather than shred things. But I also understand that that's not an uncommon thing for libraries to do these days. That's why we have electronic collections. Electrons exist forever.

But some people really got upset. And that led to a lot of people really examining not just the Science Library, but the library in general, under a microscope. Those people were primarily emeriti faculty. I might just add, parenthetically, in the sciences, a lot of faculty when they become emeriti become historians. Some become really good historians. Don Osterbrock, in my view, was a great example of that. I think he was as good a historian as any historian. Some of our faculty find interesting things that they discover. I think it was from John Faulkner from whom I learned this interesting story about Newton. Everybody quotes Newton as having been this great man who said that everything he achieved, he achieved by standing on the shoulders of giants. Newton, everyone knows, was not the most pleasant of individuals. That's kind of known historically. But what Faulkner found was that in fact that quote came from a letter to Robert Hook, who was also a famous physicist of the day, not of Newton's caliber. Hook is the originator of Hook's Law. Hook and Newton were constantly fighting with each other. And Hook was a dwarf.

Reti: Oh!

Blumenthal: So when Newton wrote, "I have achieved what I have by standing on the shoulders of giants," he was making a reference to Hook's physical appearance. I didn't know that until John uncovered it.

In any event, some faculty were upset, and became very distrustful of the library in general. I might add that none of the books that were taken away and destroyed were books that were irreplaceable. There were copies either in our library or available through the University of California system.

Reti: Right. And some of those books that had a lot of historical value are now in Special Collections being protected.

Blumenthal: Right. Historical books are, of course, in Special Collections. They weren't stupid; the library might have been legitimately accused of insensitivity, but not stupidity. And yes, would I have wanted it done differently if we had that opportunity? Sure. But it wasn't the most egregious thing in the world, or that any of us have ever done. What saddens me is that this is an issue that has not gone away. To their credit, the library committee of the senate weighed in and talked about it and, I think, came to a rational conclusion about what happened and what needed to happen going forward. I would generally support Committee on the Library and Scholarly Communication's [COLASC] position on the subject. On the other hand, the Emeriti Association at Santa Cruz has weighed in, and basically has gone to war with COLASC and with the library. Everyone can have their opinion. I have no problem with people disagreeing and having different opinions. But I think it has led to some inappropriate behavior on the part of certain faculty members, in particular emeriti faculty members. That level of distrust has permeated discussions even about our modifications of the library. One of the accusations is that we're getting rid of more books because one of the conceptual drawings only had six bookshelves in it or something. I don't know. But it was a conceptual drawing. There was no library consultation. This was a conceptual drawing by an architect. But now, because that drawing exists, the library is accused of nefarious plans to get rid of more books. It's really become quite a sad state of affairs.

But the good news is, we got a five-million-dollar gift from an anonymous donor to redo one of the floors of the library. The gift certifies that that library floor will be named after Sandy Faber, which is really good. We are planning to move it forward. Our donors want it moved forward, despite the lobbying from some of the members of the Emeriti Association directly to the donor. And they're anxious to proceed, as am I, to get this project done.

I don't know what to do about the fact that there's been a loss of trust between emeriti faculty and the library. Normally time heals all wounds, unless you decide to keep those wounds open. (laughter) I don't see a whole lot of healing going on yet, but I trust that with time, things will get better. I don't think this is a problem I can interject myself in and fix, otherwise I would have fixed it already. A way was found a few years ago to move forward that may not have been optimal. But non-optimal doesn't mean nefarious. And you know, you learn from your mistakes. To me, this wasn't that big a deal. But boy, it has become a huge deal to a bunch of folks on the campus and I think that discussion has *not* been productive.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: I mean, you've been living it. Do you have any questions for me, or any different perspective?

Reti: I guess one question I would have would be, to what extent do you see the housing crisis on campus as being linked to the need for more space at the library?

Blumenthal: Oh, thank you for asking that. I would just remind everyone that this is intimately connected to the housing crisis on campus. What we have done on campus, to this date, is we have converted a number of doubles to triples in our dorms; we've converted a number of triples to quads. And we have basically converted almost all of the

lounges within our dorms to bedrooms. That means that, not only are students crammed into the dorms with a shoehorn, so that more students are sharing a room than we built those rooms to accommodate, but in addition, students in the dorms don't have lounges where they can go to relieve the stress of being shoved in there like sardines. The students don't have a place to go, so the place for them to go is actually the library. That's the role that the library's serving on campus. I think right now it is a critical role. I think that when we complete Student Housing West, and we convert some of those quads back to triples, and triples back to doubles, and we convert the lounges back into lounges, that will relieve a little bit of the stress on the library. But I don't think it will fundamentally change the way the library's being used because what we're seeing on our campus is part of a national trend. I think it's just going to be inevitable that that's going to be what the library's going to be going forward.

Reti: Right. I certainly see that in that every single study carrel and table is filled a lot of the time. And the library has done things like change their food policy. We used to not allow food in the library. This is all about making it a welcoming study space.

Blumenthal: And now there's areas where you can talk, and nobody goes, "Sssh!"

Reti: Right. It's a completely different library than I worked in for the first fifteen or twenty years of my career.

Blumenthal: I think it says something about libraries, that they have been able to adapt so rapidly to changing situations. At universities, things don't often change that fast. But I think the dynamics of where students go has taught librarians that their role is different on our campuses. I'm not sure that's a bad thing. I think it's actually probably a good thing. Even if you're a scholar that wants to study old books and original material, as long as that material still exists somewhere, even if it isn't sitting on a shelf where you can just

get to it easily, if it exists somewhere, if you're really serious about doing your scholarship, you'll find it.

[Finally] I want to emphasize that it is legitimate for faculty or students or others to raise issues about library policy and library practice. If you think it was wrong for the library to have taken books out of the library that weren't being circulated and to destroy those books, fair enough. If you think that there wasn't adequate consultation with the faculty or the chairs or the senate before decisions were made with regard to removal of books, fine, that's a perfectly legitimate policy question that we should be discussing. And if mistakes were made, I think it's fair to point out the mistakes to the library or to anyone, quite generally. Even if I disagree with that criticism, I still think it's a fair—that's what a university is. It's a place where we can have that discourse. However, I would want to point out that it is possible, and sometimes has happened, that that discourse has crossed the line from discourse about an issue to actual harassment of staff. That is not acceptable. Not only is harassment of staff a violation of our campus principles of community for how we're supposed to interact with each other, but harassment of staff can also be a violation, for example, of the faculty code of conduct. You don't get to harass people on the campus. I really think this distinction is important. On the one hand, faculty, for example, have the academic freedom to state their views about how the campus is run, to exercise their free speech, to be critical. There's no obligation on the part of faculty to be right. On the other hand, there is an obligation on the part of faculty to act in a sufficiently civil fashion that members of the staff don't feel victimized by those interactions. I think it's important to emphasize that distinction between, on the one hand, harassment and victimization, and on the other hand, free speech, fair criticism, and exercise of academic freedom.

Reti: Thank you, George.

Blumenthal: So that's the Science and Engineering library.

Visiting the Obama White House with Sandra Faber

So let's talk about visiting the Obama White House with Sandy Faber.³⁸³ I should add that even before going to the Obama White House with Sandy, when she won the Franklin Medal, I went to Philadelphia to watch her be awarded that medal at the Franklin Institute. I'm very proud of Sandy and all that she's accomplished, so that was a pleasure for me. But I was particularly honored when she invited me to join her at the White House when she won the National Medal of Science. For Sandy, it wasn't the first trip to the White House. (laughs) I still remember, she was invited to the White House by Ronald Reagan. He had a lunch one day for about 150 scientists from around the country, as he was trying to sell the idea of Star Wars. He invited about 150 scientists around the country, including Sandy. I remember talking to Sandy when she got the invitation. I told her she ought to go, and she wasn't sure. There was no funding for it. I said, "Just call the chancellor's office. They'll want you to go."

So she went to the White House. She told me it was really interesting. Reagan was there. I think she sat at a table with the vice president, who was then George H.W. Bush. But what was interesting about the table was that one other person who was there was co-founder of Apple. Steve Wozniak. Wozniak dominated the conversation because he had some crackpot theory. I forget what it even was. It was about aliens or something. And that kind of dominated the conversation.

So, anyway, Sandy invited me to join her at the White House. And it was interesting. Among Sandy's party, she of course had her husband Andy with her and one of her daughters, Robin, and Robin's spouse. Her other daughter, I think, couldn't make it. And me. And also Vera Rubin,³⁸⁴ who was one of Sandy's mentors. Vera had won the National

Medal of Science some years earlier. So she had the five of us as her guests. But they only gave her four tickets. Somehow Sandy managed to finagle them into giving her an extra ticket, which was not easy, because the room was so small. I bet she really had to work at it to get that. I was very grateful because I think I would have been the first to go. (laughter) I really felt honored to join her. And it was really nice, because before, early in the day, we all met together and I got a chance to talk with Vera. I'd known Vera Rubin for many years. Vera was the person who had done the work to measure dark matter in galaxies' rotation curves, which was the work that I was skeptical of that Sandy was doing a review article on., Ultimately, Sandy and I became convinced that it was true. So I was very pleased that Vera was there. I just want to say that not only was Vera a wonderful person, she was an impressive person. She got married and I think had three children. It was only later that she established her career. She not only established her career, but she became a world-famous scientist, obviously world famous enough to have done this work on dark matter, and world famous enough to win the National Medal of Science herself. And I am so proud of the fact that after Vera passed away that Sandy worked very hard to raise funds to establish the Vera Rubin Chair in Astronomy and Astrophysics in support of diversity in astronomy and astrophysics. The inaugural chair holder is Enrico Ramirez Ruiz.³⁸⁵

Reti: Oh, wonderful!

Blumenthal: I don't think that's official yet, but it is true. I did get matching money for the chair from the Office of the President. I'm very, very pleased and proud of that. I wish Vera had known that this was going to happen. I might also add, her three children, who she stayed home to raise, were all super high achievers. So she had a lot to be proud of in her life.

Reti: That's a remarkable story.

Blumenthal: So anyway, we met before, and I had this lovely conversation with Vera. I will always treasure that morning. But eventually it became time to go to the White House. I think this was in March, roughly speaking. It was cold in Washington. I mean, it was cold, you want to have gloves with you, kind of cold. We had been preapproved. I was asked to give some personal information to the White House, to the Secret Service—you know, a driver's license and various other things. I may have still had my security clearance at that time. But that wasn't crucial because most people there as guests didn't.

They took the award winners inside first, so they were well inside. And they lined the rest of the guests up outside the White House. And it was cold. We were there a long time, like an hour, just waiting in line. I wouldn't have minded if we were walking around in the cold, but just waiting in the cold was difficult. And then every ten minutes or so, somebody would come along and ask to see our driver's licenses. So we kept repeatedly having to show our driver's licenses. (laughs) It was kind of funny.

Finally, they started letting us in. I had no idea what to expect. I figured this was going to be like airport security, only more so. Because this is the White House. This is the president, right?

So they took us in one by one up this path into the entrance. And you go into the entrance, and the first thing that happened when I walked in, at the entrance there was a guard. He said to me, "May I please have your phone and your camera?"

I said sure. I handed him my phone and my camera. And I said, "Do you want my wallet or my keys?"

He said, “No. Don’t worry about it. Just walk down this path.” So I walked into the room. The first thing I noticed was a humongous machine on the other side of the room kind of pointed at me. I’m sure it was some kind of an x-ray machine. But it wasn’t like any x-ray machine I’d ever seen—it was just humongous. Then I also noticed that there was a slight breeze downward in the room. I could feel the air moving downwards, so I’m assuming that they were collecting the air to sniff for explosives.

So I walked down the pathway through this room. And at the other side, the guard met me again. It was an exit. So this was like a little outbuilding at the White House. At the exit, the guard met me and handed me back my phone and my camera and said, “You may go in now.”

So I left that little room and the path led to one of the entrances of the White House. There was somebody there who said, “Oh, you can walk up to the second floor and you can wander around in all the rooms.” I was astonished that they were going to let me free in the White House.

Reti: Wow! How fun.

Blumenthal: How fun. Of course, there were a bunch of rooms there, and they were all historic. And there was a band playing. I was talking to other people there. I knew some of the people who were guests, some university presidents. There was Sandy’s party. There was a band playing; it was a military band. They were kind of in the hallway. And then we were wandering into all of these little rooms. There were all these famous paintings. I felt a little bit like a philistine because I didn’t really know the paintings. I’d be standing with someone and they’d say, “Oh! This is the famous such and such painting.” (laughter) They were all nice paintings, but I didn’t really know them. I felt a

little bit uncultured, shall we say. But it was interesting. They had hors d'oeuvres and all that stuff. This reception went on for maybe an hour or two.

Then they called us to go into the room for the awards ceremony. They held that in, I think, the press room. I'm not sure what the room is. It was one of the rooms on the second floor. And the first thing that struck me was how small it was, given the number of people that were there because they were giving out the National Medal of Science and the National Medal of Engineering. There may have been on the order of ten or twelve award winners, and then all the guests. The audience area was completely packed. People were shoved in. In fact, I was one of the last people to enter the room, and I almost couldn't find a chair. I think they actually had to bring an extra chair for me. (laughter) So I couldn't sit with Sandy and Andy. But instead I sat with the guy who's the president of the University of Maryland.

So we all sat down and I'm looking around the room. The next thing that happens is that the cabinet walks in, the president's cabinet. I recognized Steve Chu, who I knew. They sat down. I'm looking around the room at the audience and I thought I saw George Shultz.³⁸⁶ So I said to the guy next to me, I said, "Is that George Shultz over there?" It was across the room and the lighting wasn't that good. He said, "I don't know." I said, "It sure looks like George Shultz to me."

Then finally Obama walks in. On the way in, he stopped to greet only one person. It was the George Shultz lookalike. So I said to the other guy, "I think it is George Shultz."

Reti: Yeah, yeah, (laughs) That's great.

Blumenthal: So Obama goes up and he gives a little speech. I was about as far away from Obama as I am from that TV screen [in the office]. He was really quite close. The room was packed. I was taking pictures. And I was struck by a couple of things during his

remarks. First, if you ever watch his speeches, you always see him look left and then look right. It's teleprompters, I kind of knew that. But he does teleprompters in an interesting way. These were projected on the back wall of the room in very large letters. And they were so widely separated that that's why he goes extreme left to extreme right. When I use the teleprompter, we've tried to place them so that they're maybe at 45 degrees, or maybe at 30 degrees from front, so that you can engage the audience as you turn. But Obama's were more like 45 or maybe even 60 degrees, so he really had to turn. I've seen that in speeches he's given on TV as well.

The other thing that struck me about Obama's remarks is that he stopped several times to ad lib. He ad libbed throughout the ceremony. He ad libbed a lot. And it was clear he was having fun. It was obvious, this guy does a lot of events. He does a lot of stuff in a day. Some of them are just things he has to do, and some of them are more fun. And he was having fun with it. It was clear. He was joking around a lot. I don't remember his jokes anymore, but I thought it had a really good spirit to it, and I really appreciated that. I didn't get to shake his hand, but Sandy certainly did. We have the picture of her receiving the award. He said some very nice things about her as he gave her the award, all well-deserved. So it was really a moment of pride to see that. I had pride in Sandy; I had pride for the campus.

And it turned out I knew one of the other award winners quite well: Sid Drell,³⁸⁷ from Stanford, also won one of the medals. I think he was in a wheelchair. I think his daughter was with him, pushing him in the wheelchair. He's since passed away. But I've known Sid for many years. Sid was the associate director of SLAC for many years. He wrote one of the textbooks that I used as a physics graduate student: Bjorken and Drell. And he was Joel Primack's dissertation advisor.

Anyway, it was a wonderful event. I was also struck by the diversity of the awardees. Henry Yang mentioned something to me about that because Henry was on the committee that chose the awardees. He said there was a real emphasis on diversity. So that's why I was so impressed.

Afterwards there was a lunch and a reception. It was kind of like a standing lunch. It was fun and I got to talk to a lot of people, which was interesting. I remember, I was not impressed with the food. (laughter) But again, it was a very nice reception, lots of people there. Eventually it kind of broke up. Obama didn't stay for the reception. He left after the ceremony. I'm sure he had many things to do that day. But he seemed to enjoy it. I just want to acknowledge that.

Reti: Did it change your relationship with the White House, just having been there?

Blumenthal: It's a fair question. It gave me a sense of familiarity. I was disappointed because once when we were in Washington when the kids were small, I really wanted to get them a White House tour and we couldn't swing it. We did it too late. So I was pleased to be able to do it under those circumstances.

I was very impressed with the security. That one just blew me away: the security. They didn't even look at my pockets, take anything out of my pockets, but I'm sure that they were scrutinizing carefully.

Reti: Well, that's wonderful.

Blumenthal: All right. Moving right along.

Reti: What next? Governors.

California Governors

Blumenthal: So I was going to say something about the governors I've met. God, what can I say?

Reti: We did talk about your efforts at UCSD on the recall of Reagan.

Blumenthal: Oh, I did talk about it. Yes, I was involved in the recall, and we already discussed it. But I also think I did see him in UCSD. I was one of the participants in a demonstration when he went to a regents meeting at UCSD. The issue with Reagan, from my perspective as a graduate student, was twofold. One was the budget cuts to the university. It was clear that he wasn't supporting the university. It was partly his reaction to the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, satanizing the university and the students at the university. It was partly that. And it was partly firing Clark Kerr. You know, as a student, I didn't deify Clark Kerr. I didn't really even know that much about Clark Kerr. I certainly didn't appreciate what a great figure he was in American education at the time. I did not appreciate that. And I wasn't particularly inclined to want to be supportive of university administrators, but the fact that Reagan was so adamantly against him made him something of a hero for that reason. But it was really his strong reaction against students, etcetera, that we felt very strongly about.

Reti: So I know from my study of UCSC's history that there was a demonstration here specifically in support of Clark Kerr and against the fact that Reagan had fired him. Was that explicit at UCSD as well?

Blumenthal: I think it was a part of it. I don't remember it as being that explicitly the message. The regents were meeting there. The regents in general were the bad guys, because it was the regents that officially fired Clark Kerr, although it was Reagan's

campaign pledge to do that. No, I think, as a participant in the demonstration, and I was only a participant, it was just general anger at the regents and at Reagan in particular.

Reti: And how lively a demonstration was that?

Blumenthal: I think it wasn't as lively as I've heard the Santa Cruz demonstration was. I think we simply demonstrated. I only remember getting a glimpse of Reagan as he was getting out of a limousine and going into a meeting. There was a lot of security there so, a brief glimpse was all I got. Maybe that was fine. But that was Ronald Reagan, for what it's worth.

Pete Wilson, I did know a little bit when I was at San Diego, because I think he was a city councilman or something at the time.

Reti: Mm hmm. And eventually he became mayor of San Diego.

Blumenthal: He eventually became mayor and then governor. At San Diego, he was regarded as a real moderate, a real centrist. When I met him—and I don't really remember the context, it was some meeting or something where I met him; I think it was more social than political—I remember being singularly unimpressed. He didn't seem to have that much gravitas. I would never have predicted that he would go on to be governor of the state and a powerful political figure. He just didn't seem that impressive. And again, it was in a social setting. I think it was at a party. He seemed a little even gauche. But certainly not impressive. So it was amazing to see him evolve to become governor, and evolving from being regarded as a moderate to ultimately a hater. It was he who strongly supported laws to ban gay marriage. It was he who strongly supported laws to mandate English as the language of California. And it was he who strongly opposed domestic partner benefits.

So now we move on to Arnold. Arnold was elected governor when Gray Davis was recalled. And although he sold himself as a Republican, he also sold himself as a different kind of Republican who could reach across the aisle. He called himself the first post-partisan governor.

Reti: Uh-huh. (laughs) If only.

Blumenthal: If only. I remember it very distinctly because I had some hopes for him when he was elected governor. But I also remember that I listened to his first state of the state address while I was driving between Riverside and Los Angeles. I was at Riverside for some reason and I was driving to Los Angeles. I remember my sense of extreme disappointment because in his first state of the state address he outlined his priorities for the state. It was maybe four or five priorities. And they were really all straight out of the Republican playbook. It was clear that he was espousing a relatively conservative agenda. Many of those had to go to the voters and they failed. And he failed, fortunately, to get most of those things done.

He was remarkably unknowledgeable when he came into office. Bob Dynes became president of UC and when Arnold came into office—I think I was either vice chair or chair of the senate by then—Dynes talked about going to meet him for the first time. Dynes suggested a compact between the governor and the university and Arnold had no idea what he was talking about. But ironically, there'd been compacts with several previous governors. By the way, most governors, and later even including Arnold, violated the terms of the compact. But it was a way of trying to stabilize the funding and the relationship between the university and the administration. So Dynes was able to negotiate an agreement with Arnold, although it didn't hold that long.

The first time I actually met Arnold was, ironically, across the street from where I live in Monte Sereno. There was a reception for him. The Silicon Valley Leadership Group gave a reception. One of the bigwigs at the time at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group was the guy who lives across the street from me. So I walked across the street to go to this reception.

Reti: (laughs) Nice.

Blumenthal: And a couple of things really struck me. One was that he showed up with Gray Davis. It turns out that he and Gray Davis became really good friends, so Gray Davis actually accompanied him to this event. It was a barbecue, an SVLG barbecue.

The second thing that struck me was how impossible it was to get to talk to him, because everybody was clustered around him. So I didn't even try. The third thing that struck me was how short he was. I was just amazed at how short he was.

Reti: Really?! In *The Terminator* he looks like a giant.

Blumenthal: That's right. But he's muscular, or at least was at the time he did those movies, a very muscular bodybuilder. But knowing how proportioned he was doesn't necessarily tell you his size.

Reti: Right. It's just an assumption, probably based on camera angles as well.

Blumenthal: Yes. He was remarkably short. And remember, that's from my perspective at six-foot-four.

Reti: Right. You're six-foot-four and he was probably, what?

Blumenthal: Five-nine. I don't know. I'm guessing.

Reti: Something like that.

Blumenthal: But you understand—

Reti: Right. You expect this giant.

Blumenthal: I expected a giant.

Reti: Yeah, I was picturing a giant at the party. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So that was my first meeting with him. I think I probably did shake his hand, but that was about it.

The second time I saw him was on a trip to Sacramento with, I think, Mark Yudof. We met in the governor's office. He seemed nice enough. He certainly spoke with an accent. One of the things he did to all of the people who met with him, as we were leaving he handed us all a cigar. He put a cigar tent next to his office and he would take people out there to smoke cigars. So he handed us all a cigar. I came back here and I gave mine to Ashish. And I noticed in Ashish's new office that as I walked in there the other day, that he still has that cigar. (laughter)

I was there as chancellor. I think several of the chancellors accompanied Mark Yudof to meet with Arnold. It was a pleasant enough, but not particularly substantive meeting. We did try to make it substantive. He just didn't want to be all that substantive.

His relationship with the university—well, he really didn't come to regents meetings, except for the final regents meeting of his governorship. He was not a real friend of the University of California. His budgets were not particularly good. They were better than Jerry Brown 1.0, but that's a very, very low bar. He was not particularly supportive of the regents, per se.

An interesting story Monica Lozano told me—Monica Lozano later chaired the board of regents and she and I served together on the board when I was a faculty representative. Monica had two children who were roughly the same age as mine, maybe a little younger. Monica used to fly up to the regents meeting on Wednesday, stay for the regents meeting, and then fly home Wednesday night, and then fly back up the next morning to the Thursday meeting.

After I was chancellor, I was reminiscing with her. I asked her how her kids were doing. I knew her husband. Her husband's a professor at Loyola Marymount University. I said, "You were really committed. I'd hoped you could become chair of the regents in those days, but you clearly didn't want to. It was years later that you became chair," when her kids were out of the house.

She said, "Yeah. I actually tried to resign."

I said, "What do you mean?"

She said, "I made a decision I couldn't keep doing it." Monica's day job was as the owner and editor of the biggest Spanish language newspaper in the country, located in Los Angeles. That was her job. She was doing that while being a regent and while being a mother. She decided she couldn't handle it anymore, so she decided to resign. She actually made an appointment to go see Arnold. She said she met with him and told him she was going to resign. Then she said, "I'll help you find my replacement, especially if you want to find a Hispanic person to be my replacement."

Arnold was very nasty. He said something like, "I don't need your help or anyone's help to make my appointments. I'll do them myself." That convinced her to not resign.

Reti: Oh, wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So she ended up not submitting her resignation and she stayed on the board, and in fact was later reappointed to the board by Jerry Brown. But she's since resigned from the board because she now heads this foundation that deals with higher education and she didn't want a conflict of interest.

And in fact, just as an aside, I ran into Monica yesterday. As I was getting to the regents meeting, she was walking out. We greeted each other and gave each other a hug. She said, "Thank you for your service." She had come to see Dorothy Leland. Anyway, it was good to see Monica. And probably I'll see her again in the future in my new role.

Anyway, Arnold, at the end of his term in office—and he was reelected, so he served something on the order of six or seven years as governor—in his last year he started making comments about how terrible it was that the state of California gives more money to prisons than we do to higher education. He really wanted to change that around and give less to prisons and give more to higher education. So he did indeed start to move things in that direction.

Reti: Do you have any sense of why he made that shift?

Blumenthal: I think he was near the end of his time in office and he wanted some legacy. But I'm kind of cynical, because he did nothing to promote that legacy during his first five to six years in office. And it was only near the end that he did this. I mean, it was good that he did it, but he could have started a little earlier.

Then he attended the final regents meeting of his term. He gave a little speech. I thought his speech was really offensive. He basically said, "You know, lots of people are going to tell you they need more money to do this or to do that or to do the other thing. It's never true. People never need more money. They just need to be more efficient. But don't believe them when they ask you for more money." That was basically his message. I thought it

was the wrong message and delivered in the wrong venue. So at the end of the day, I was not impressed with him as governor.

Having said that, I have to say, he appointed some damned good regents. When Gray Davis was governor, most of the regents Gray Davis appointed were wealthy donors to his campaigns. That's why George Marcus was on the regents. That's why Norm Pattiz³⁸⁸ was on the regents. That's why he appointed the infamous Haim Saban. Gray Davis appointed people who were rich. Haim Saban,³⁸⁹ Norm Pattiz, George Marcus, some of whom were good, some of whom were not so good. They weren't terrible regents. He appointed Judy Hopkins. Judy, I was so delighted, came to my community reception a week ago. So he appointed some good regents. He did appoint Odessa Johnson, who was a retired schoolteacher. African American. Very good. She was a fantastic regent from Fresno. He did appoint Dolores Huerta. So he did appoint some good regents. But his regents weren't, by and large, that impressive.

Arnold appointed some really good people. He appointed Regent Gould, who I think was one of the best regents ever. I could go down the list. But there were very few losers among his regental appointments, and even ones who, when you looked at his regents, you couldn't tell whether they were Republicans or Democrats. Some of them were Democrats.

Reti: I wondered how he was able to do that.

Blumenthal: I don't know how he did it, but I have to give him praise for it. They were good regents. They were nonpartisan regents. They were regents who took things seriously. I mean, yes, there was some variation, but by and large, it was a damn good group of regents who are now all going off the board. I think Regent Zettel will be the last of them to leave, and she had been very responsible. So I want to give him credit for that.

So let me just tell you this one little story about Gray Davis and Haim Saban. It's one of my favorite stories. I'm the chair of the Academic Senate; I served as a faculty representative to the regents for just over a year. And there was a reporter from the *San Diego Union Tribune* who was doing a story on regental attendance at regent meetings. So she called me up, and she wanted me to talk to her about it. I said sure. I always talk to reporters.

So she said, "What do you think about regental attendance?"

I answered her honestly. I said, "Most regents attend almost all meetings. And they don't get paid for it. They get their expenses paid, but half of them turn down the expenses that are offered by the university. They get big, thick briefing books that are many, many inches thick that they have to read before every meeting. They're very hard working and very committed people and their attendance is quite good."

Then she said the question which I should have anticipated, which was, "What about Haim Saban?" Haim Saban is a Hollywood guy. He was the inventor of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. He was in communications. Norm Pattiz later told me that the reason Haim Saban wanted to be on the board was because Norm was appointed to the board and they were colleagues, in a way, or competitors or whatever. Haim Saban was a big political donor to Democrats, so he gave a lot of money to Gray Davis. Davis appointed him to the board, and he'd been on the board for a few years.

So when this reporter asked me the question—what about Haim Saban—I made an instant decision to give her the answer I did, knowing that this would be quoted in the paper. You know sometimes when they're going to quote you. So I said, "You know, when I joined the board of regents a year ago, I was really looking forward to meeting Haim Saban. Now, a year later, I'm still really looking forward to meeting Haim Saban."

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no. That's quotable.

Blumenthal: I did say it. I knew what I was doing. So she went with it; it got published.

When I was chair of the senate, I always got there at exactly nine o'clock, or maybe five minutes to nine. I never let them schedule me before nine o'clock, because I had to drop off kids and stuff. So I'd get there at exactly nine o'clock. So the next day, when the elevator opened on the twelfth floor, all of the press people were standing there, all of the communications people. Because they were also on the twelfth floor. They were waiting for me.

As I got off the elevator, I was greeted with, "Do you have any idea what you've done?" You just don't speak ill of a regent, right? That's just not done. They were really mad at me. Did I know what I was doing? I said, "Look, I told the truth. What's wrong with that?" (laughter) They were furious with me. I have to say, to Dynes' credit, he never said anything to me about it. He never complained, never said anything. Nor did M.R.C. Greenwood. M.R.C. I would have expected, maybe, to have done something. But she didn't. They left me alone. I told the truth. Three days later, Haim Saban resigned from the board of regents.

Reti: (Exhales) Wow. Power of the press. And truth.

Blumenthal: Power of the press. And of truth. I think there's some moral there. I'm not sure exactly what it is. But I've never regretted having said it. Even at the time, I didn't regret saying it. I knew what I was doing.

Reti: That's a good story.

Blumenthal: Okay. We just got to Jerry Brown. So, first, a few comments. Jerry Brown 1.0 was pretty terrible for higher education. He followed Ronald Reagan. We all hoped

that he was going to be the great second coming of Pat Brown. Nothing could be further from the truth. He clearly, from day one, had issues with higher education in general and UC in particular. I hold him personally responsible for Proposition 13.³⁹⁰ At the time, Brown had a very large surplus in the state, a huge surplus. So when the Prop 13 people came along and said, “Oh, well, we want to change property taxes and make it difficult to ever raise taxes again,” they could point to the surplus and say, “Well, the state’s accumulating money.” People felt that Brown had been accumulating money because he wanted to show a huge surplus when he ran for president.

But anyway, Proposition 13 passed. It passed pretty strongly. And then immediately after its passage, Brown, who was not in favor of it originally, announced that he was a born-again Proposition 13 enthusiast. So he embraced it. He was not a particular friend of the faculty of UC. He was famous in that term for having said that faculty at the university do not deserve higher salaries because they get the psychic rewards of being a faculty member. That comment was the comment that convinced me that I would never in my life again vote for Jerry Brown.

But his era was noted for budget cuts. There were stories that David Saxon, who was then the president of UC, would get a call at two in the morning to go to Sacramento to meet with Brown. He’d show up expecting to talk about budgets, or UC and higher education, and Brown would want to talk about some abstract issues in Greek philosophy. It was just weird.

It was Brown who also started CalSpace. He wanted to have a California space program.

He wanted California to have our own aerospace program and our own satellite program, so he gave a million dollars to the University of California to start something like that about space. A million dollars won’t go very far, but that’s what he started with. He made

it a line item in the UC budget. Nobody knew what the hell to do with it, so a group was formed of representatives from each campus. I was the representative from Santa Cruz. I was still pretty junior. We're talking the early to mid '70s. I might not even have been tenured yet. There were all these senior people on it. We had these discussions. Several of us wanted there to be something related to space science and astronomy associated with CalSpace.

(laughs) I got assigned the job of writing up the proposal. I couldn't believe it. I was the most junior person and I got assigned to do this. So I wrote up something. And it wasn't bad.

Ultimately, CalSpace got going. It became an institute within the university. It was housed in San Diego, which turned out to be a huge mistake. It started doing a number of things. It established a few CalSpace faculty members at various campuses, not including Santa Cruz, I might add, but one at Berkeley, one at Santa Barbara, and one at San Diego originally. Ultimately, they funded a few more at San Diego. The first director was Jim Arnold.

The second director was Sally Ride.³⁹¹ Sally had been on the staff at Stanford. I think they didn't make her a permanent faculty member there, so she left, went to San Diego as a faculty member. She was appointed the director of CalSpace, which she did for a number of years.

So in her first year at CalSpace, she called me up and asked me if I would serve on their board. So I agreed to do that. I didn't really know her before then but I knew her husband well because he was a former student of ours, Steve Hawley.³⁹² They were married for a while. Then they also got divorced. Anyway, so I was on that board for a number of years.

I was there throughout the years that Sally was the director, and then for a year or two beyond that as well, although I eventually got fed up and left.

Basically, we would have these meetings every year where we would give out mini grants and evaluate proposals. It was really quite interesting, because it was a good board of people and had really super smart people on it. One of them was Charles Alcock,³⁹³ who's been for several years now the Director of the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. And another was Virginia Trimble,³⁹⁴ who's a faculty member at Irvine and formerly had been at Caltech. Virginia was one of the smartest people I knew. She knew everything about astronomy. Everything. She would write these annual reports about all that's interesting in astronomy. She was a very smart woman. She was very opinionated and she worked hard. I mean, we were all assigned to be primary or secondary reviewers on proposals. I tended to read the proposals on which I was a primary or secondary reviewer. She read them all. I disagreed with her a lot, but I always found Sally was reasonable.

So anyway, that was CalSpace. CalSpace kept going for many years. No space program ever got started. And over the years, CalSpace became more and more controversial, in part, in my opinion, because it became too San Diego-centric. When Sally was director, she appointed a couple of Russian emigres to be CalSpace faculty fellows at San Diego. But that kept depleting the budget. I kept pushing that if we were going to have faculty members supported by CalSpace, these should be competitive and rotating positions. That got nowhere, so I got more and more disaffected with the organization.

That was the organization that the Academic Senate, the systemwide senate, eventually started looking at as something that should be eliminated. Eventually it was, after some

long, agonizing reviews that went on over and over and over again. Eventually it disappeared. But that was all originally from Jerry Brown.

Jerry Brown 2.0 was in many ways an impressive character. Number one, and most importantly, he was a responsible fiscal adult for the state. He inherited a very much out-of-whack budget from Schwarzenegger, with huge debts, huge little tricks that they had done to artificially balance the state budgets. But those tricks were still one-time fixes that were really bad since eventually reversing them would entail considerable cost. Brown is a skinflint. It really served us all well because he balanced the budget and he started essentially paying down the debt. It wasn't a real debt, but he started reversing these tricks that they were using to essentially borrow money. He put the state on much sounder financial footing. I think he deserves a lot of credit for that. On the other hand, Brown 2.0 still had the same antipathy for higher education that he did as Brown 1.0. But he started attending regents meetings. I don't know if Brown 1.0 attended regents meetings.

Reti: You weren't there.

Blumenthal: I wasn't there. But for his first four years, Brown attended basically all regents meetings.

Reti: That's a dramatic difference.

Blumenthal: A dramatic difference. It felt a little bit like the adult trying to keep the irresponsible children in check. And yet, he for a long time refused to make any appointments to the board. He argued that he knew the board was doing really well and he didn't want to upset the interpersonal balance of the board. I suspected that that was complete bullshit. But that's what he said.

Reti: What do you think his real reason was?

Blumenthal: I think he wanted to get a better measure of the board for when he was going to make appointments. I think that he was owing some of the people who he reappointed. He reappointed a lot of people. He reappointed Dick Blum, a major Democratic donor. He reappointed Norm Pattiz, a major Democratic donor. He reappointed Sherri Lansing, who is another major Democratic donor. He ultimately reappointed Monica Lozano, who left the board and then he reappointed her. I don't know if she was a big donor, but she was such a responsible person that it made sense to reappoint her. So he reappointed a bunch of people for the board.

But he attended all those meetings. His comments were all over the place. He took the university to task that we weren't converting to online. That was why we started ILTI as a university, to try to assuage him. He put money in the budget to get us to convert to online education. He gave us more money to do online stuff. He felt that that was going to be the savior of higher education, and it was a matter of faith.

He was also not straightforward. I remember one board meeting, which I will never forget, where in a discussion of the budget for the university, Hadi Makarechian, who was one of the regents, who was actually appointed by Arnold—Hadi started questioning why the governor didn't support the state making contributions of the retirement system of UC, given that the governor did support making contributions to the retirement system of CSU. And so he said, "Why is this fair, why is this equitable, and why is this reasonable?"

Brown gave some long answer that made no sense. And then Makarechian, bless his soul, said, "Well, you haven't even begun to answer my question. What you said made no sense. How would you really answer my question?"

Brown said, "Well that's what we call in politics a good question."

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: The CSU system is given money to make their state contributions to their retirement system, but UC is given no money for that purpose. So, for the employer contributions, the UC part of the contributions to retirement, we've had to take that out of our operating expenses.

Reti: Right. So there's no state assist, or augment, or whatever you would call it, on the retirement.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So then you may remember that Brown was the sponsor of Proposition 30.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Brown 2.0.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: To save education. He really pushed hard. This was going to be for education. I know that the university, in support of that, encouraged all the foundations to give money. Actually, very few of the foundations gave money, but the UCSC Foundation, did. They decided to make a contribution to the Prop 30 campaign. I remember the meeting because when the foundation approved that, they also said that the treasurer of the foundation should make sure that Jerry Brown himself knows that there's money coming from UC Santa Cruz.

So he decided to call the Yes on Prop 30 campaign in Oakland³⁹⁵ one day. He called up and guess who answered the phone? Jerry Brown.

Reti: Oh my goodness!

Blumenthal: So really, to the horse's mouth, they got that information up there.

Reti: Well, I do recall that he came to the campus to speak about Prop 30, because I was there. That's the only time I remember him being on campus.

Blumenthal: No, he's been several times to the campus. He told me he enjoyed running on the campus.

I had several meetings with Jerry. The first meeting was in Oakland. I don't think I told you about that. Did I?

Reti: Was this related to Prop 30?

Blumenthal: No.

Reti: So can we just backtrack a second, because I'd like to hear your assessment of how successful Prop 30 was for UC.

Blumenthal: Sure. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't finish. So at the end of the day, Prop 30 passed. UC got no additional money from Prop 30. Zero. Not a dollar.

Reti: Really?

Blumenthal: You could argue that Prop 30 saved us from being cut more, but I'm not sure anyone would have really put in all that much effort in order to save us from cuts. I mean, there was an expectation we would get some support from that additional money. And we didn't. We got nothing. Zero.

Reti: Well, that's important to get on the record.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

So my first meeting with Jerry Brown was kind of apocryphal. I mean, it was weird. I was in Oakland. I was already chancellor. I was having dinner late at night with the chair and vice chair of the Academic Senate. I think there was one other senate person there—I forget who it was—but there were three senate people, plus me. And as you probably already know, I made it a habit to have dinner in Oakland with the chair and vice-chair every month.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So we're in this restaurant. It was relatively late. It was a late dinner. We were the only people in the restaurant. And in walk Jerry Brown and his wife. He was, at the time, the mayor of Oakland, which was the job he held prior to becoming governor. And by the way, from what I can tell, he was a pretty good mayor of Oakland. I think he had some real achievements. I will even say, in his benefit, that he was quoted during the campaign for governor that he wished that he had been mayor of Oakland before he was governor the first time. He felt he would have been a better governor.

In any event, he walked in with his wife. Sat down. Then he saw these four guys sitting there in the restaurant wearing jackets and ties. So he got up. He was campaigning at the time.

He came over and he asked us who we were, so we all introduced ourselves. He sat down for a few minutes to talk with us. The faculty that were there wanted to talk to him about faculty salaries. (laughter) He had zero interest in talking about faculty salaries. It was quite obvious. So I thought I would be the great diplomat. I changed the subject. I started to talk about the Public Policy Institute study. There have now been several since then, but at the time, there had just been released a new Public Policy Institute study saying

that California needed a million more college graduates by the year 2025 than we were on a pathway to get. Now they will say 2030. That was when they said we needed it by 2025. So I was telling him about this new Public Policy Institute result that had just come out that day. I kind of went on and said, “California has a knowledge-based economy and we need more scientists, we need more engineers, we need more doctors, we need more business leaders. We need more people to lead our intellectually based economy.”

Jerry looked at me and he said—and I swear to you this is true; I couldn’t have made it up—he said, “Well, you know, the number of good scientists that you get scales as the square root of the number of scientists you train.” So, in other words, if you train twice as many scientists, you’ll get 1.4 times as many good scientists. What do you say when somebody says that to you? Honestly, if you had said this to me, I would have asked you what you were smoking before you came and sat down.

I didn’t know what to say. So I said to him, “Look, I don’t agree with you. I think it scales linearly. I think if you train twice as many scientists, you get twice as many good scientists. And furthermore, you can’t know how good a scientist is going to be while you’re training them. Albert Einstein got a PhD in physics and could not get a job in physics afterwards. Yet he ended up being *Time* magazine man of the century. So you just don’t know how good the scientist is going to be.”

Reti: True.

Blumenthal: So he looked at me and he said, “You’re from Santa Cruz, right?” I said yeah. He said, “Well, did you know Gregory Bateson?”

So, a little background here. Let me pause for the moment. Gregory Bateson, as you may know, was a faculty member at Santa Cruz, Kresge College. He’s also one of the many former husbands of Margaret Mead. He was quite a renowned figure during the ‘60s and

maybe into the '70s. He had quite a cult following. He had written a book called *Toward an Ecology of the Mind*, which was the basis of a course that he taught at Kresge College. I have to admit to you, I've never read his book. But it turns out that Bateson retired from Santa Cruz. And after he retired, he met Jerry Brown at a Buddhist retreat. They became best friends. Besties.

Reti: Wow. No kidding. I knew there was some connection between them, but I didn't know that.

Blumenthal: Ultimately Jerry appointed him to the board of regents.

In those days, I didn't follow regental stuff. I was aware that Bateson had been appointed, but I didn't follow regental meetings, except for the so-called Angela Davis rule, which we already talked about. When the regents voted to rescind the Angela Davis rule in 1978, he was one of the regents who voted against rescinding the Angela Davis rule, which offended the hell out of me because I couldn't imagine why a faculty member would vote to not do that. Anyway, that's about all I knew about Gregory Bateson.

Brown said, "Gregory Bateson, did you know Gregory Bateson?" I said no. He said, "Oh, Gregory Bateson, he was a great guy. You should read his work. It will inspire you." He was going on about this. Then he said, "Well, I'm going to make it one of my missions to get Gregory Bateson into the California Hall of fame. I'm going to make that my mission." Bateson was already dead. So sure enough, a few years later, he did get Bateson into the California Hall of Fame.

And then when that part of the discussion was over, he went back to have dinner with his wife. I remember walking out of the restaurant with the three other faculty members. I remember what my comment was. I said, "I would have felt a whole lot better about that conversation if he were drunk." (laughter) That was my first meeting with Jerry. Of

course, I ran into him a lot when he was on the regents, when he was coming to the regents meetings.

One day, I'm sitting there minding my own business. I didn't interact with him much, by the way. Nick Dirks at Berkeley interacted with him a lot. He was very interested in Nick's research and he'd read Nick's book, or one of his books.

Reti: What does Nick research, generally?

Blumenthal: Work on the Far East, on India. He's sort of a historian or anthropologist. And then I think he also interacted a little bit with Gene Block at UCLA. Big campuses. But he kind of left me alone. Anyway, one day I'm sitting there in one of the side rooms, eating something, or doing something. He walked over to me and sat down and said, "You're an astronomer, right?" I said, yeah. He said, "Can you explain to me this multi-universe stuff?" (Reti laughs) I said, sure. So it turns out I know a lot about multi-verses. So I started to explain it to him. Two or three minutes into the explanation, he interrupts me and he says, "Do you think there's any life in those multi-verses, or do you think there's life elsewhere in our universe? What's the story on life elsewhere in our universe?"

So I stop what I was doing and I transition into talking about the Drake equation, and what we think about life in the universe and searches for life in the universe. I started talking about that. Two minutes or three minutes into that, he interrupts me again and he says, "Well, do you think an asteroid is going to hit the earth?"

I said, "Well, eventually one might hit the earth."

He said, "Well, what are we doing about it." I said I didn't know that we were doing anything about it. And he said, "Well, you've got to be doing something about this. Do you know my friend, the former astronaut, Rusty Schweickart?"³⁹⁶

I said, “No. I don’t know him.”

He said, “Well, I’m going to have to make sure I introduce him to you, because this is an important question. He’s interested in that question.” So that was the conversation. Really weird.

So at the next regents meeting, I made a point of bringing one of my textbooks. I gave it to him. (Reti laughs) I never heard back from him again. Never a thank you. Never a nothing.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: Really weird.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: My next interaction with him—

Reti: (laughs) That is a bizarre conversation.

Blumenthal: Oh, I might add, after that second conversation, not long thereafter I had dinner with John Laird, who was in his cabinet. So I told John the story. John thought it was hilarious.

Reti: (laughs) I can picture that.

Blumenthal: He said, “That’s Jerry. That’s every conversation with Jerry. He has ADD.”

Reti: Seriously?

Blumenthal: Seriously. He said, “The only way I get anything done with Jerry is I don’t let him change the subject. If he wants to, I always pull him back to the main subject at

hand. John thought it was hilarious. He also thought the story about the square root of number of scientists was hilarious. He said again, “That’s just Jerry. He loves to take somebody who’s serious and pull their leg.” But I certainly couldn’t tell he was pulling my leg.

Anyway, the next time I saw Jerry, or had a conversation with him, was even weirder in some ways. So the regents meeting was over.

Reti: (laughs) I’m waiting for what was weirder than that.

Blumenthal: Well, I said, “in some ways.” So the regents meeting was over. I was having lunch. There was a little lunch room next to the regents meeting. I stayed behind to eat the boxed lunches that they put out. I was having lunch with George Kieffer, the chair of the regents. We were just having a nice conversation. Jerry comes over and sits down. Jerry is a good friend of George Kieffer’s or vice versa, so they know each other well. Jerry starts talking about negative things about lawyers.

Reti: Oh. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Then he started talking about law professors, and how worthless law professors were. I’m trying to think, do I say something about my wife? I decided there’s no point to personalizing this. But basically he’s saying that most articles written by law professors were worthless, not worth the paper they’re written on. He’s going on and on about how bad law schools are. Part of it was to get under George’s skin. I don’t think he knew or cared anything about me. It was just so weird that—and you know, Brown had legal training.

Reti: I thought so.

Blumenthal: In fact, I didn't mention this—earlier, when he was attending regents meetings, he was going on this big long rant about online education and how important it was. We need to be moving much more online, maybe even fully online in our education at UC.

Reti: Fully? Like completely, no physical campuses at all?

Blumenthal: I don't know. I think he was heading that direction.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: I really, really, really wanted to ask him a question, and had I been the faculty representative, I would have asked him. The question I would have asked him, I would have said, "Governor. You hold a degree in law and you hold a degree in divinity. Do you believe either of those degrees would have been as valuable to you had you had them online?"

Reti: Mm hmm. Why was he so fired up about online education?

Blumenthal: Saves money. He thinks. And you don't have to build infrastructure. I think that was one of the reasons why he would never agree to a bond measure for UC.

Reti: Oh. Because he wanted UC to back online education?

Blumenthal: Yep. Strange guy.

I did try, very unsuccessfully, frustratingly unsuccessfully to get a regent from Silicon Valley. I always try to think about angles to play and things to do. Of course, it struck me that virtually every campus except for Santa Cruz has had one or more regents who are clearly associated with that campus. I'm not talking about alumni regents. I'm talking about fully appointed, twelve-year regents. Every other campus had people, had regents

who were clearly in one way or another associated with—you know, Norm Pattiz lived in Santa Barbara. And so on and so forth. Our closest regent was George Marcus, but George has been a major donor to UCSF.

Reti: And when you say closest, because he lived the closest?

Blumenthal: He lives in Silicon Valley.

So I just got it in my head, at a certain point that, especially with the number of openings increasing on the regents—and furthermore, the regents were not very diverse, particularly in terms of gender diversity—so I got it into my mind that we needed to have a regent associated with Santa Cruz from Silicon Valley who was a woman. I thought a lot about that and I decided I would do something about it. So I, first of all, had to identify who this person was going to be. I started making some calls. I called Shellye Archambeau. I thought it would be great to have an African American chief executive from Silicon Valley. Shellye didn't want to do it, though. She bowed out. She was just too busy. So then I called Kim [Polese], who's another woman executive from Silicon Valley. She didn't want to do it, either. Then I talked to Talat Hasan, Kamil Hasan's wife. Kamil Hasan is our incoming foundation chair.³⁹⁷ His wife is also an entrepreneur. Very smart woman. Talat agreed to do it.

So having gotten a candidate, somebody who was a chief executive of a company, somebody who was a woman from Silicon Valley, someone who's a major Democratic donor, somebody who has held fundraisers for Jerry Brown in her house, and who's known nationally. She and Kamil are national leaders in Democratic fundraising. So I figured, what better choice could I make?

So I found two pathways to the governor's appointments process. It's one thing to have an idea; it's another thing to make it real. One was through George Kieffer. George was

very close to the governor. He was interested in getting more regents. I convinced George that Talat would be a great appointment, so he pursued it. And he got nowhere. Jerry was not going to make appointments at that moment in time. So it kind of died on the vine. I still thought it was a great idea, though.

Then a couple of years later, George came to me and said, "I think the governor is going to start to make appointments. Could you remind me who you had suggested, and could we dust that off?" So I got in touch with Talat. She was still interested. I used George to get her name before the appointment secretary again. Then I also used my contacts at the Office of the President, through a completely different route, to get to the governor's office. So I got her name before him twice.

She was actually interviewed by the appointments person who works for the governor. So I at least got her an interview. But she never got appointed. That was, at the end of the day, a complete failure, but I still think it was a good idea.

Reti: I can see your point that politically, for the Santa Cruz campus to not have had a regent who had close ties to this campus, is really problematic.

Blumenthal: It's very problematic. Let me remind you, when Denice Denton was inaugurated chancellor, only one regent showed up on campus. It was George Marcus. I'm sure he showed up because he was the closest, but he was in no sense actually associated with the campus. George himself was, from the meeting in which Denice was appointed, skeptical of her appointment. I was in that meeting as faculty representative to the regents and he was the one regent who expressed some skepticism. So he was not an enthusiastic participant.

So, yeah. The campus has never had one. I think we need one. Is it worth trying again going forward? Sure, I'm sure it is. It might be possible with Gavin [Newsom] that this

could work. I kind of regret that I'm not around to try it again, because I might be able to get further with Gavin than I ever could with Jerry. But maybe Cindy [Larive] will be able to do better than me. So, anyway, I'm not sure how we got off on the regent thing, but I think it's an important issue.

Reti: Absolutely.

Blumenthal: I do resent the fact that we don't have a Santa Cruz-associated regent. I think the only other thing I would say about Jerry is it's clear that his antipathy toward higher education is somehow associated with his father. His father was the co-developer of the Master Plan for Higher Education. His father really supported infrastructure and the development of the university. His father was the great hero of higher education. And his father basically gave up his professional career for higher education because it was the free speech movement at Berkeley that cost him his governorship. That's what Ronald Reagan campaigned on when he beat Brown.

Reti: I never thought about it quite that way.

Blumenthal: I think that there are parenthood issues and father issues going on with Jerry. I don't claim to understand them deeply, but I think this level of contrast with his father's values indicates something going on there psychologically. It's funny, because at a regents meeting once, Jerry even brought that up himself and admitted that that's what some people think. I don't know whether he was convinced it was true or not, but he at least acknowledged that that's what some people feel. I was kind of surprised by that. Most people wouldn't have done that, even if it were true. Anyway, that's Jerry Brown in all of his glory.

Reti: Wow. Those are some stories.

Blumenthal: I'll tell you, I think one of the best events for the University of California was Jerry Brown having a last day in office, and finally being termed out.

Reti: I think people don't often realize how much Jerry Brown's lack of support impacted UC in terms of the rising costs of an education here and the lack of state support.

Blumenthal: Yeah, and it's funny because the governor that followed him the first time was George Deukmejian, who is arguably the most conservative governor, certainly since Pat Brown was governor. I was just talking to David Gardner, former president, at the regents meeting. I was at the regents dinner and I was chatting with him. I've met Gardner a few times. In fact it was funny, while I was chatting with him, Kelly was off somewhere, came over, she saw his name and said, "Are you the *real* David Gardner?" (laughter)

Reti: That's funny.

Blumenthal: Anyway, I was chatting with him, and he reminded me of this story, which I'd heard before. After Deukmejian was elected governor, it took a few months before Gardner actually was able to meet with the governor. When they met, Deukmejian asked him what were the challenges faced by the university. Gardner said, "The fundamental challenge is budgetary. We are so underfunded that this is affecting our ability to do what we need to do." He talked about it at some length. He said he finished with an ask. He said, "What I would love to see is a three-year plan to rebuild all of the resources that we lost over the last several years and bring us back up to where we should be. I think that would be a reasonable three-year plan."

Deukmejian thought about it and said, "Well, I have some money. Why don't we just do it in one year?" So if you look at the UC budget, there was this huge spike that came under Deukmejian. I'd heard the story before, but hearing it from Gardner directly was interesting.

Reti: That's surprising. So then that brings us to yet another change very recently.

Blumenthal: Gavin Newsom. Gavin is still an unwritten book. (laughs) I think the jury is very much still out. I don't know what to make of Gavin yet. It's still way too early. Let me say a couple of things about him. One, when he was mayor of San Francisco, I enormously admired his courage in making gay marriage happen. This was long before it became popular. I mean, we lose perspective because opinion has so broadly changed on the subject, but back when he was mayor of San Francisco and he decided that they would do gay marriages at the courthouse in San Francisco, 99 percent of the general public was opposed to the idea. I don't know if it was 99 percent. Maybe it wasn't that percentage in San Francisco. But the moment he did this, knowing that he was a young, avid, handsome political guy, I felt like he had completely destroyed his political career and done it in defense of a principle that he believed in. That's what I really, really believed at the time. Of course, I was completely wrong. I was completely wrong. He didn't ruin his career. Instead of him having to change his views, the world changed their views, or the nation, or the state changed their views, so that gay marriage is now very much an accepted concept. I admire him for being ahead of his time, and I admire him for having the courage to stand up for what he believed in. To some extent, since becoming governor, his decision to commute all death sentences to life imprisonment I think is a similar kind of move, which may be not completely popular in the state among all segments of the population. But since he holds that principle dear, he wasn't afraid to act on his principle. I give him really high marks for having that kind of courage.

Having said that, (laughs) I just don't know about him. I have had several conversations with him. On occasion I've found myself seated next to him at the regents table. And during regents meetings, he is quite fine with just joking around. I remember one meeting

we were just sitting there cracking jokes with each other about the discussion that was going on. I found him very human, somebody I could relate to.

Reti: That's good. It's a good start.

Blumenthal: It's a good start. On the other hand, sometimes he would go off on subjects. He was another one of those regents who really went on about online education and how UC was irresponsible for not doing more online education. I don't know that he would have wanted us to go all the way, but he wanted more. He and Jerry apparently never got along very well, so I always viewed that as a good sign, for what it was worth, although you would never know that from his public statements. He praised Jerry on a number of occasions, and reminded people that—Gavin's application to college at Santa Clara included a letter of recommendation from Jerry Brown. Every year when the tuition issue came up, he always gave this impassioned speech about how by raising tuition the regents were taking a cop out; what they really needed to do was to twist the arms of the legislature to fund us more. And at some level, he was right. But at another level, it was impractical. I mean, you have to make those tuition decisions early. I don't see any argument against making the decision with the idea that you could rescind it if the state buys out tuition. But he was in a position where he couldn't vote for a tuition increase, or didn't feel that he politically could do so, and he needed a way to do it. I don't know. I just didn't find his remarks to be particularly cogent or convincing or good. I can disagree with someone and still find their arguments good ones.

He took on some issues, like the issue of coaches of football teams within UC who don't do all that they can to advance the academic success of the students. But at some level, he was right in taking on that issue. It was a big issue at Berkeley, where a lot of people on the football team weren't graduating. So it was a fair issue. He seemed to want to

micromanage it to an extent that made me nervous. For example, one of the proposals he brought forth was the idea that all coaches or all athletic directors had to report directly to the chancellor, which I didn't want. It made no sense. You could argue it in Berkeley, but you certainly can't argue it in Santa Cruz. Fortunately, the regents didn't act on that.

But I still remain hopeful. I think his heart is in the right place. I also interacted with him when he appointed me to be on the CIRM board, the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine. It was a lieutenant governor appointment. It languished for a long time. I heard nothing. I didn't worry about it, but I just heard nothing. Months and months and months went by. Then finally one day Newsom showed up at a regents meeting with one of his assistants. The assistant arranged for me to meet with Gavin and talk about it. Our conversation was pretty brief. The only thing I remember getting a reaction from him on was my comment that it was really important for CIRM to do all we could to establish a good record of success because money would soon be running out and they would have to go back to the voters to renew. He appreciated that. I assumed he had thought about that himself and was pleased to hear it coming out of my mouth.

So, I'm hopeful. His first budget for the university was not a good one. I think it was better than Jerry Brown would have given us, but it was not a good one. The thing that I most mind is that in the last year of Jerry Brown, the legislature agreed to buy out a tuition increase. So that was in the budget. That was passed by both houses of the legislature. But when it went to conference committee and went to the governor, he wanted that changed. It was changed to be a buy-out with one-time money. A one-time money buy-out made it fine last year in terms of the budget. But it meant that the money disappeared the next year. So you're replacing a permanent thing, like a tuition increase, with a one-time fix.

So part of the budget request for this year was to replace that money with ongoing appropriations. That was not successful, but we didn't even get any one-time money again. So basically the regents last year didn't raise tuition. And as a result, we got one year of buy-out, and that's it.

Reti: So now we're faced—

Blumenthal: It's a 95 million dollar hole in our budget for UC. You think about what that means for Santa Cruz. It means about a six million dollar hole in our budget here. Six million dollars would buy you thirty faculty members. So it's not insignificant.

Reti: So now we're faced with another difficult budget.

Blumenthal: We're faced with another difficult budget. It's better than a Jerry Brown budget. But it's still difficult.

Reti: Yes. In terms of educating a new governor on the issues for UC, like who takes that on?

Blumenthal: That's a good question. Typically, it would be the president or one of the senior political people in Sacramento. Gavin has appointed a very bright woman, Lande Ajose,³⁹⁸ to be his higher education interface, so I think to some extent that responsibility falls on her shoulders as well.

Reti: Is that a new position?

Blumenthal: That's a new position. The woman who's doing it is quite good. I've met her and talked with her.

Reti: So, we'll see.

Blumenthal: We will see. That's why I say the jury's still out.

Reti: Right. This is history that's happening as we speak.

Relationship with the UCSC Academic Senate as Chancellor

Reti: So today is May 29, 2019, and this is Irene Reti. I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal for the 35th session of the oral history we are doing together. We're going to start today by talking about your relationship with the Academic Senate as chancellor.

Blumenthal: Thank you, Irene. Yeah, it's certainly interesting, as a former senate chair, then, to see the senate from the other side, in a sense to have gone over to the dark side and see things from the other perspective. I really like to believe that it didn't fundamentally change my perspective on how things should work but I'll let others decide whether that's really true or not. That certainly is my view.

Some issues we've already discussed. We already talked the first LRDP and the issue of getting senate approval to bring this forward in September, so that I didn't have to be in conflict with my own publicly-stated views as a faculty member. We also talked about the challenging meeting we had after the first Kerr occupation.

But I'd like to begin talking about the senate by just talking about the fact that I have been so, so lucky. I've been chancellor for thirteen years and I have had some really, really outstanding senate chairs that I've worked with. I think the first chair was Faye Crosby. Faye kind of pushed me into doing some things that I wasn't really anxious to do and she was right. I value the fact that some of the senate chairs have really brought a different perspective and put me in a position where I really could go further than I might have done otherwise. But the senate chairs include Lori Kletzer,³⁹⁹ who went off and was a very successful provost and has come back and is now the interim provost at UC Santa Cruz.

Kim Lau, our current chair, is fantastic. I enjoyed working with Quentin Williams. I'm reluctant to name the names because I'm sure I'm going to forget somebody. Don Brennis⁴⁰⁰ comes to mind; Olaf Einarsdottir,⁴⁰¹ Susan Gilman and Joe Konopelski⁴⁰² were also excellent chairs. I hope I'm not leaving anyone out. But I feel blessed because I worked with really responsible people in the position as senate chair, people who've been a pleasure to work with, who've really been interactive.

One of the things that took me a while to do was to include the senate chair in the chancellor's cabinet. I wanted to do that as soon as I became chancellor, but several vice chancellors persuaded me not to do so, on the grounds that this was an administrative group and they were uncomfortable and didn't feel they could talk freely. So I was dissuaded from doing it. But a few years ago I decided that most of those people had gone, so I just did it and invited the senate chair to join the cabinet.

Reti: And what was your argument for why this would be a good idea?

Blumenthal: Thank you for the question. I'm a big believer that we're stronger when everybody understands what's going on and we don't draw boundaries; we don't erect walls. We just try to keep communications open. People sometimes can contribute in ways you might not have imagined. It might not be their bailiwick or their department, but they may have a perspective on an issue. I think that's true within the cabinet, and I think that was a reason for bringing the senate chair in, because she brings a different perspective to the cabinet. So I view that as extremely healthy.

Furthermore, I would point out that when I was the chair of the Academic Senate systemwide, Bob Dynes did have the chair of the senate be a part of his cabinet. I thought it worked well, and I very much enjoyed being a part of the cabinet. Sadly, Mark Yudof kind of got rid of the cabinet as I knew it and so has Janet Napolitano. So there is no

equivalent of the old Bob Dynes cabinet anymore. But as both a senate chair and as the chancellor, I think it is a very, very worthwhile thing to have the senate chair there. I'm sorry it took me so long to do it, but I'm glad I did it. And as I say, they've contributed. I think the cabinet in general has been a really good body.

And this is an aside. I don't think I've talked about this—the cabinet has been an opportunity to have real discussions. Typically, what I do at cabinet meetings is I start myself and talk about what's new or what's on my mind. That might be three minutes; and it might be an hour, depending on what's been going on. But I encourage people to ask questions. If an issue comes up, we have a discussion of it. Then my rule is that I go around the table counter-clockwise. So any cabinet member who absolutely doesn't want to speak should sit to my left. (Reti laughs) Any cabinet member who wants to speak for sure should be sitting on the right side. Turns out everyone more or less sits in the same place, anyway.

We often run out of time halfway around the table. But I thought I would just let people know it. I wasn't going to call on people randomly; that's just not my style to put people on edge. So that's what the cabinet has been. I think that's also worked really well because the cabinet meets regularly with the Senate Executive Committee, what's called CabSec. It's a very large group. It's the entire Senate Executive Committee, which is probably fifteen people, and the entire cabinet, which is probably another fifteen. So we really squeeze into that room.

And the whole point of CabSec is—it's really a couple of points—one is to jointly discuss issues that are a joint concern, so there's a broader range of perspectives in the room, but also to prepare us for upcoming senate meetings, for example, issues that are likely to be hot button topics, etcetera, just to make sure that this is an important line of

communication. I'm a big believer in no surprises in the relationship between the administration and the senate. I would love to tell you that I started this, but I did not. I believe CabSec started under M.R.C. Greenwood.

I'm so pleased with the senate chairs that I've dealt with. In addition to those meetings, I meet on a regular basis with what I call the senate leadership: the chair, the vice chair and the chair of the Committee on Planning and Budget, those three, plus, the director of the senate, first Mary-Beth Harhen and now Matthew Mednik. I meet with them and with the EVC, and with Ashish, and EVC's chief of staff. We have those meetings on a monthly basis. Again, it's a good way of exchanging information and making sure that everybody knows what's going on. Those meetings have saved us a lot of trouble down the line, because we found out things early on both sides.

In addition, I do meet regularly with the chair of the senate. These days, what I usually do is go to lunch once a month with the chair of the senate. Anything is fair game to discuss and we do it whether we have an agenda or not. I feel really fortunate. We've dealt with a lot of issues over the years through the Academic Senate, some of which I've already talked about, some of which have been really good and fruitful discussions, and some of which have been uncomfortable discussions. I don't want to go through a gazillion examples, but I want to talk about a few examples.

One example is faculty salaries. I know we talked about this earlier but it is worth more discussion here. So when I stepped in as chancellor, the following two statements were true: statement number one was that at the University of California writ large, the faculty salaries were about 12 to 13 percent below our comparison eight institutions as a UC system. In addition, the second statement that I think is true is that when you do a reasonable methodological comparison of Santa Cruz faculty salaries to the other nine UC

campuses, we were the lowest in the system. And the way we got there was because we had been very loathe on this campus to give off-scale appointments.

When I came in as chancellor, the senate folks, faculty welfare, CAP, the Committee on Academic Personnel, CPB, came to me and basically said, “Look, we have a big problem. We’ve done these really big studies and we are behind the rest of the UC system.”

That caused us to think really hard. The senate recommended that I, as chancellor, use my discretion to raise every faculty member’s salary by a certain percentage to bring those numbers up. I didn’t want to do that. The reason I gave to the senate is that if we have fallen behind the rest of the system, it was because of the way that we’ve done our academic personnel process. That’s what got us into that situation and I felt that we needed to modify our academic personnel process on campus to get us out of it.

Reti: Otherwise, you’d just be sticking a giant Band-Aid on it—

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: —and you wouldn’t be addressing the underlying problem.

Blumenthal: That’s right. So we had a lot of discussion about what our goals should be. We made a goal to bring faculty salaries up to the median of the UC system, excluding Berkeley and Los Angeles because they’re so much richer than we are. That was an agreed-upon goal and we came up with a method of doing it, whereby during the academic personnel process, we added half a step of salary to everyone who got an acceleration in their merit increases. So we started that program. We realized that if we were going to do that, we would have to do it either for three or six or nine years, a multiple of three because people are reviewed on a three-year basis. Slowly, we did indeed watch our salaries come up relative to the rest of the system. We actually, a few years ago, two or three years ago,

we achieved our goal, the median of non-UCLA/Berkeley campuses. Of course, at that point, there were more complications.

So let me stop for a moment and explain something, and then come back to this point. In the UC system, faculty salaries have a scale. You move up the scale and your salary goes up as you move up the scale. And for most of our history, or certainly our early history, there was a huge effort to keep faculty salaries on the scale. It was possible to go off-scale under unusual circumstances, but there was a real prejudice on this campus to keep salaries on scale.

As salaries began to fall behind the rest of the world, or compared to our comparison eight institutions, some of the other campuses kept their salaries up by providing significant off-scale amounts in addition to the scale salary. So the idea was on those campuses, keep the scales pure, in the sense that if somebody should be a professor step three, they should still be a professor step three, but boost their salary above what the professor step three salary is.

At Santa Cruz, we were much too conservative to do that. We didn't do that for many years. It long predated me. That's why we fell so far behind. So by adding half a step whenever we did an acceleration, we were basically building the off-scale salaries. So that's how we got basically up to the median of the UC system (excluding UCB and UCLA).

Reti: I see.

Blumenthal: Simultaneously with my becoming chancellor, there was an effort to try to change the systemwide salaries to better compare to the comparison eight institutions. I hate to say this, but what motivated that was one day—and I was acting chancellor at the time—there was a big newspaper article that the CSU system faculty union (and they're unionized and they do systemwide negotiations), had reached an agreement with CSU for

a four-year plan on faculty salaries that represented significant increases. That day I got to the Council of Chancellors early and I saw Bob Dynes and Larry Hershman talking to each other about this. They were saying, “Well, we’re going to have to do this, too.” It bothered me that it wasn’t like they did it because it was the right thing to do. They did it because they had to do it. But if you’re cashing a check at Safeway, I don’t know that you care whether it’s value was the right thing to do or whether somebody was pressured to provide that value to the check.

But in any event, we had this meeting of the chancellors where the provost of the university, who was then Rory Hume, proposed that we increase the salaries associated with all of our steps and that we do it in such a way that we sweep up the off-scales. I’m making up the numbers, so the numbers aren’t real—but let’s say a faculty member was a professor step two earning a hundred thousand dollars currently, but had an additional five thousand dollars off-scale appointment, so he was earning \$105,000. What Rory Hume was proposing to do was to raise the salary scales by some amount. Let’s just assume it was ten thousand dollars at that level. So that salary scale would be now \$110,000. But because that’s more than the previous scale plus off-scale, the off-scale would disappear and that person would earn \$110,000. If that person had instead a \$20,000 off-scale appointment, what they would have done is they would have said, “Okay, you’re earning a hundred thousand plus twenty off-scale. We’re raising the salary scale to 110. So we’re going to reduce your off-scale now to ten thousand dollars and you’ll earn still 120,000.”

That increased the salary scales. It did it in a way that was cheaper for the campuses, because they were sweeping up off-scales. That was a big plus, at least, in my perspective, when we had almost no off-scales. And we could thereby do a big increase. There was a four-year plan that Rory put forward, discussed extensively by the chancellors. It was

supported by only two chancellors, me and Bob Grey, who was then the acting chancellor at UC Riverside. We were the only two; the two acting chancellors supported it and everybody else was opposed. Of course, from a Santa Cruz faculty perspective, this was a great plan as it advantaged particularly faculty without significant off-scale salaries. From a UCSC administrative perspective, it was also a good plan because before the time of rebenching, money for faculty salaries came directly from UCOP rather than being absorbed by the campus.

One of the arguments that the opponents made—and the biggest opponent was the then-chancellor at San Diego, Marye Anne Fox—her argument was that she had all of these non-producing associate professors who never got promoted to full professor. They're getting old, near retirement and if we give them this great largesse of increasing the salary scales, then they won't retire for at least three years because they'll want to get higher retirement. That argument turned out to be specious because the Academic Senate later did a study of non-performing associate professors. And yes, there are some. But the numbers are really pretty small. You wouldn't, shouldn't make major policy based upon those small numbers, even at San Diego. My argument to her was, "If you've got all these non-performing associate professors, that's on you. You shouldn't be giving them tenure." And anyway, so that was one reason I succeeded: the weakness of the arguments of the opponent. There were much better arguments they should have used, but didn't.

The other thing that pushed it forward was the fact that Rory Hume carried a lot of weight. He was the provost and Dynes was prepared to listen to him. So that's why it went through.

The argument against was not a bad argument, though. It could have been made. It was that by doing this, you're actually disadvantaging your best faculty and advantaging your

worst faculty. Your worst faculty are the ones that don't have off-scales. Therefore, you're giving them a big boost. And your best faculty, because they have large off-scales that are being swept up, are not going to get any increase from it. So the counter argument was a very good one, but it was just not made adequately. I don't even know if it was made at all at the time.

Anyway, it went through. It was a four-year plan. But, in fact, it turned out we did it only one year because of the budget crisis the next year. I might also point out, if I haven't done this already, that the previous year the regents had passed a regents item called RE61A. And in RE61A, the regents pledged that they would bring all faculty and staff salaries up to market within a decade.

So that's what happened at the Council of Chancellors. There was in at least the beginnings of an effort to raise the systemwide salaries up to competitiveness. But it fizzled after one year, so it didn't get very far. Meanwhile, we put in place our own process on campus, in consultation with the senate. Everyone seemed fairly happy about it. And we basically stuck with it for, I think, nine years. And at the end of nine years, we did an assessment and discovered we were now at the median salary. So we reduced it from an extra half step to an extra one third of a step. We were still doing something additional, but not quite as much. Unfortunately for us, other campuses started doing more. So we have since, I think, fallen behind again. Now the Senate Committee on Faculty Welfare has done some new analyses and has claimed we're way behind, an analysis that Herbie Lee actually disputes. The differences are that, number one, that the methodology being used is different. I mean, there's no necessarily right methodology, but if you decide on a methodology, you stick with it. At a later time, it's fair to come along and say, "Well, let's think about something different," but you've got to examine it carefully.

The second issue was that they disputed our elimination of Berkeley and UCLA from the consideration because those are by far the highest. UCLA's above our comparison eight institutions. But again, realistically, we don't have the resources on the campus to compete with Berkeley and UCLA. We can play games till the end of time—you could argue that we should at least be honest with ourselves with where we stand. But in terms of setting goals, I don't think that including UCLA and Berkeley leads us to a goal that's fundamentally achievable any time soon.

And then the third issue was that they wanted to include living expenses or housing costs as part of this, arguing that campuses that have the highest housing costs should have an adjustment as a result of that. That's not something the UC system has ever done. It doesn't mean it's not the right thing to do. It certainly is something that, for practical purposes we have to consider, because we need to recruit and retrain faculty. But including housing costs in a salary methodology is hard to justify, particularly to the state of California. So that's a debate that is ongoing. I think it's a rich debate.

A year ago, the systemwide Academic Senate argued that we needed to finally get real and do a salary plan that would bring the systemwide salaries up on average to the comparison eight institutions, which means another 10, 12 percent.

Reti: Now we're talking about faculty salaries?

Blumenthal: Faculty salaries. And a lot of debate about it. They came up with a proposal. They argued strongly. They couldn't even convince me. The reason they didn't convince me was because this was the end of the year and although they said they could identify money in the budget to do it, I didn't believe it. My argument was, if you're going to do something serious, you do it at the beginning of the year and you budget for it in the regents budget.

So last year they ended up doing was what we might call a 4-0 plan, where they increased the salary scales by 4 percent, all of the salary scales. So it was something, but it didn't increase any of the off-scale amounts. That corresponds roughly to a 3 percent average increase. It doesn't sweep up off-scales like what had happened before. It wasn't a bad thing to do. I also would argue that getting the salary scales more in line with salaries is a good thing, because otherwise the salary scales lose all their meaning. Why have them at all?

Reti: Right. Because then why would you have a scale? You could just randomly give people money according to their merit.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I've often said as a faculty member, "You want to put me down a step in rank? You're welcome to do it if you give me more money. I don't care."

Reti: (laughs) Yeah.

Blumenthal: But anyway, then this year came, and there was surprisingly no discussion of this for the longest time. Finally Michael Brown came up with a plan, which was a 5-0 plan, which would actually move the needle of getting us back toward the comparison eight. It went to the chancellors. At that discussion, there were nine chancellors opposed, and one chancellor in favor: me. I argued, and actually I persuaded the other chancellors that we needed to do this for the next year, this 5-0 plan. My argument was that we had put off the senate the year before, arguing that we needed more time to budget for it. I said, "You can't make that argument twice. That's bad faith. If as a matter of policy you conclude that this is a bad idea, then that's fine. Then say next year you're going to do nothing. But we really, to keep the faith, and we need to do this." Then several chancellors who were adamantly opposed to this actually changed their minds and they agreed to do this next year, a 5-0 plan.

Interestingly enough, I had a private conversation with Janet Napolitano at dinner at the regents meeting. She told me she wants to continue the plan. She wants to get us back. She set that as a goal. I think that's really good. I hope she has the stick-to-it-iveness to actually make it happen in light of strong opposition from the chancellors. I don't know what Cindy Larive's, the next UCSC chancellor's view is going to be on this. I have not discussed this with her, but generally speaking, EVCs are against doing this, and she comes from the EVC world. The reason EVCs are against doing it is because it costs a lot of money. Nothing is cheap. So it will be interesting to watch that particular dynamic going forward. Michael Brown is in favor of it. But he's not a chancellor. Janet is in favor of it. So this will be a very interesting dynamic.

This has put our campus at a disadvantage because last year we did a 4-0 plan. But some campuses did a 4-4 plan, where they also increased off-scales by 4 percent. So that put us further behind the other campuses. As a result, I have talked to the senate folks here about the fact that we're going to have to make some changes. We're going to have to do something even more than the plan that we did last time in order to catch up and keep up with the other campuses. But now I'm spending Cindy's money on doing that. (Reti laughs)

Promotions. I could just make a comment here. One of the jobs of the chancellor is to decide on promotion to tenure. I think we probably talked about the Angela Davis rule before.

Reti: Yes, yes.

Blumenthal: Tenure promotions are assigned to the chancellor. The two personnel actions that are assigned to the chancellor which are not re-delegatable are promotion to tenure and promotion to above scale. Those are the cases that get to my desk. I'm happy

to delegate everything else. Some of them are even re-delegated further by the EVC. It's been interesting over the years, because when I get a case, for example, for promotion, it comes with a lot of background information. It will come with letters from outside references, referees, at least five, usually, and sometimes ten or more. It will come with a full letter from the department and their vote on tenure. That will be followed by a letter from the dean, which will get his or her independent assessment of the case. That then goes to the Senate Committee on Academic Personnel. They meet. They look at the file and they give their own recommendation. Then that recommendation formally comes to me. But what I do is first I send it to the vice provost of academic affairs, currently Herbie Lee.⁴⁰³ Before Herbie, it was Sandy Chung,⁴⁰⁴ who was very good at this as well. They will do an independent look at the file. They'll read all the recommendations and they'll give me their opinion about what I should do. I insisted that then these files then go to the EVC, who will read it. I don't insist she write a letter. She might just write a sentence, or sometimes she writes a letter, telling me her own independent assessments of the file. So when I get a file, I've gotten a lot of advice along the way. I would say the overwhelming majority of cases that I get for tenure, or above scale, are pretty much unanimous across the board. Everyone agrees. I would say that's probably true in 60 percent of all cases. And that's good. I love those cases. They're really easy to do.

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Blumenthal: The worst problem for me is when the issue is to grant tenure or not to grant tenure. We are very fortunate that most assistant professors who are not going to get tenure ultimately just leave. They get the message and they leave; it doesn't really come to a chancellorial decision. So that's good news for the chancellor. But I do get some cases that are very borderline and they have been really difficult. The good news is that in thirteen years, I've maybe had five borderline cases.

Reti: That's not too bad.

Blumenthal: There are cases that might go either way, on either side of the border, but for the ones that are really tough—the bad news is, I spend a lot of time on those cases. When I read them, they would almost always, because they're borderline, have conflicting advice from these various parties. So I'd read them, read all the advice. Then I'd put them aside, typically. My habit was when there's a disagreement between the dean and CAP, I either call both parties and discuss it with them, or if I'm inclined to agree with one, I'll call the other and give them a last chance to convince me I'm wrong. And then, if it's a tenure case, I'll put it aside for a week or whatever and think about it, and then come back and reread the file, as though rereading it is going to give me deeper insight. And then I make a decision. We've had not a lot—maybe four tenure denials in the time I've been chancellor. I'm not sure that number is right. I'm always very conscious about whether or not I'm in agreement or disagreement with the senate Committee on Academic Personnel. They do publish annually a list of all their agreements with the chancellor and disagreements with the chancellor, and with the EVC and with the deans. I really want to be in the high side of agreement, but I also am willing to disagree if I feel it's appropriate.

The tenure cases are the ones that are the most difficult. Often they hinge on awkward issues, such as whether a book is really accepted by a publisher, and what our expectations are, and what are the standards. If it's going to be a marginal case, there's usually a reason why it's marginal. Somehow I've worked through all of those. Looking back on the tenure decisions in the light of hindsight, I'm not really disappointed with the cases where I granted tenure, and I'm not really disappointed with the ones where I didn't. I did my best, for better or for worse.

The much more common issue that drives me crazy was when we get tenure cases, or above-scale cases, where there's disagreement among the parties about how much additional off-scale there should be. So if somebody's accelerated to tenure, they might get some additional money on top of that, for example. There's big disagreements. The departments tend to be all over the place. Some departments are really good in hitting it right on the nail; some are really bad and never know exactly what they should do. The deans are usually much better, and much closer on the mark. CAP is usually much better and much closer on the mark. I often get tenure files where there's a difference of \$1500, or half a step or something. For me, that's very frustrating because I don't believe that I have the wisdom to be accurate to \$1500. On the other hand, everyone takes this so seriously. I would have been perfectly happy if the agreed upon method of resolving disputes was a dartboard. (Reti laughs) But that wouldn't do, so I do have lots of conversations with CAP chairs and with deans about disagreements.

Reti: Well, I kind of have a follow-up question for that.

Blumenthal: Sure.

Reti: Something that's come up with some other people I've interviewed is because UCSC doesn't have a large budget, this person described us as like a little incubator/fishpond. Then other institutions come along and say, "Oh, look at that nice fish there. I think I'll spirit them away because I can offer them more money." So we lose some of our most talented faculty because they get recruited away, especially faculty of color, but other faculty, too. Is that something that has come up in these kinds of decisions: how do we keep people here?

Blumenthal: Yes and no. It all is complicated and involves several factors. The retention of faculty is a big, huge issue. Of course, the process is such that if a faculty member gets

an offer, then the department can move to do a retention offer as well. In other words, we go through the same personnel process as we would for a merit review, but we do it in an expedited way. It goes to CAP, the whole thing, and the dean. But we try to make an offer that quote “matches” unquote the outside offer. Rarely do we really match an outside offer, but we frequently come close, or within shouting distance, and at the very least, show the faculty member how valued they are. As a matter of principle, this is a disturbing practice because it rewards those who seek outside offers and it penalizes those who are loyal, and wouldn’t think of doing an outside offer. Having said that, however, some of our best faculty get offers, and we’ve got to respond to it. That’s happened a lot over the years. I think we have generally responded pretty well and pretty quickly in getting counter-offers out to faculty members who had outside offers. And I think overall, our retention efforts when that happens have been as good as any UC campus, maybe even better.

During the worst of the budget crises, when we faced these huge cuts, we had a lot of faculty who got outside offers. I met with a bunch of them individually and offered them an opportunity to meet with the chancellor. It was very interesting, because I expected at first that they’d march into my office and demand an extra ten thousand dollars to stay, or whatever. That almost never happened. When they met with me, they already had their salary discussions with their department and dean. What they wanted from me was assurances that there was a place for them at the University of California, that we weren’t going to go self-destruct, that they could be a productive faculty member and have a future here.

Reti: At the University of California, or University of California, Santa Cruz.

Blumenthal: At the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Reti: Huh. So it raised anxieties for them about the sort of long-term health of the institution.

Blumenthal: Yes. Exactly. They were really looking for me to give them assurances. And I did. And we were fairly successful in terms of retaining faculty. Again, not all. Frankly, there were some faculty that—(Reti laughs) I remember one case. I won't say who it was. But a faculty member doing some very high-profile research that was quite impressive in terms of profile, but his dean was having a lot of trouble with him. When he got an offer from UCLA, I talked to the dean. I said, "Should we now try to make a counter?" He said, "No. Let's just thank the lord that UCLA is willing to take him." (Reti laughs) In those days, it was the case that officially the chancellor of the campus recruiting from another campus had to call the other chancellor and tell them what they were doing. In fact, most campuses didn't comply with that requirement. But UCLA did. I got a call from Gene Block one day. He said, "You may know this already, but the campus is recruiting so and so."

I said, "Thank you. I did know that and I just want you to understand that this particular individual is a high-maintenance faculty member." Which is true.

And he laughed, and he said, "Yeah, and we don't have any of those at UCLA." (laughter)

That particularly faculty member had come to see me at least a half dozen times over the years.

Reti: Wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So, the answer is yes, we do get recruited. We are sometimes seen as a fishbowl that you can reach into. But it hasn't been that successful for outsiders. In some cases, yes; in some cases, no. I remember when Lars Hernquist⁴⁰⁵ was in my department.

We recruited him heavily to come to Santa Cruz. He was unbelievably productive. He was writing 150 papers a year. I didn't know how a human being could do that. And then a friend of mine told me that they had been asked to review a faculty member for tenure at Harvard, and basically he said that that person is good, but not nearly as good as Lars Hernquist. I said, "Oh, no! I wish you hadn't done that." And sure enough, Harvard came calling and offered Lars a position. I knew Lars quite well and I knew that the appeal of being at Harvard was a guarantee; there was no way he'd give that up. It happens. It's the world we live in.

I guess I've covered faculty salaries now, and promotions. Anything else I want to say about promotions? Oh, just one other comment. I mentioned that the senate does an annual report on our comparisons of the senate recommendations with the actions of the chancellor and EVC and deans. I am almost always in agreement on issues like tenure or above scale with CAP. I can only think of one, or maybe two examples of disagreement these many years on the issue of tenure. On the issue of salary, there have been many more disagreements. But I'm always pleased that when they publish their table, it shows that I'm just as likely to offer a higher salary than they want, as I am to offer a lower salary. And to me that's an important distinction. And I have to give CAP credit, particularly a couple of the CAP chairs who have been remarkably good at being consistent. I remember one year I made some decisions—some in agreement, some disagreement with CAP—and I had this conversation with the CAP chair about the next case. She was pointing out to me that I was being inconsistent in my own decisions, that CAP had maintained careful consistency, and that I was not being consistent. I have little doubt that she was right, because I don't live in that world. That's not what I do all the time. This is just something I do when a file crosses my desk and I want it done as quickly as possible. So I have no

doubt I've been inconsistent over the years. CAP does a good job of being consistent. And that's one thing I want to acknowledge.

The other thing I would just mention, as an aside, is my chance meeting with two other chancellors at UCOP about promotions. So one day I'm walking to the Council of Chancellors and I'm up on the twelfth floor of UCOP going to the conference room where the meeting is going to be. And as I'm walking down the hall, somebody calls me into a little side room where Gene Block and Pradeep Khosla,⁴⁰⁶ the chancellor at UCLA and the chancellor at San Diego were sitting. They asked me to come in for a sec, so I came in. I asked them what they wanted and they said, "Well, do you do the promotion cases on your campus to tenure?"

I said, "Yeah, of course I do. It's regental policy." And it turns out neither of them knew that. It turned out that neither of them had done promotions on their campus. They felt that when they became chancellor, they were informed by their staff that this was not their decision. This could be done by the EVC. So they didn't do promotions.

Reti: That's kind of shocking.

Blumenthal: But this is a big deal because of course I was well aware of the Angela Davis rule, etcetera. So I said to them, "Look, you guys have got to go right downstairs to Charlie Robinson, the general counsel. There may be cases that could be litigated because you didn't follow appropriate university procedures." It wasn't their fault. They were told differently. What chancellor is going to come in as chancellor and read a big, thick, humongous book of all the rules, or the *Academic Personnel Manual*? For God's sakes, no human being would do that. But you have to rely on your staff. They felt that they had been misled.

Reti: Well, that's interesting. I mean, it raises for me other questions that we can talk about later about transitions between chancellors and how one trains a chancellor. Or do they get thrown into the swimming pool?

Blumenthal: Right. Exactly.

Reti: But now we're going to continue by talking about joint task forces at the Academic Senate.

Blumenthal: Yeah. One of the ways that the administration and the senate has worked together very well is to occasionally form joint task forces to deal with issues that are of mutual concern, where we want, from the get-go to develop policy that reflects the perspective of both the administration and the senate. A great example of that a few years ago is the Graduate Studies Task Force. When M.R.C. was chancellor, she set a goal of 15 percent for graduate students on the campus, a goal that I reiterated after I became chancellor, and a goal that became much more fraught after rebenching because after rebenching, we were obliged to get to 12 percent PhD students on campus, which we have still not done. We were given money in expectation that we would achieve that number of graduate students. And we're still getting that money, though we have not delivered on that promise.

Reti: Do you know how close we are to 12 percent?

Blumenthal: We're still a ways away. We've got a ways to go, like 400 students, something like that. And the issue, just to be really clear, is not entirely our fault. Rebenching happened just as the budget was being cut dramatically by the state. So we essentially used rebenching money as part of the way of taking our budget cuts. We also hollowed out faculty positions, so we didn't refill faculty positions. The upshot of that all was that we ended up with fewer faculty, and therefore the ability to supervise fewer PhD

students. And the amount of money for graduate students that we got from rebenching was a small fraction of the cuts that we sustained as a campus. So that's one effect that took place. We have since rebuilt the faculty numbers, and we've added faculty at a rate that has exceeded where we started with. We've also prioritized hiring faculty in areas where they do supervise PhD students. But we're still behind the curve there.

There's another phenomena which I only partly understand, which is that if you make a plot of the size of the campus on the X axis, and the percentage of graduates or PhD students on the Y axis, you might expect that the percentage should be independent of the size of the campus. But in fact, for the UC campuses, it's a perfect correlation. The bigger campuses have a higher percentage of PhD students. If you make that plot nationally, the correlation still persists. So larger campuses, presumably because they've had more time to develop, and develop multiple means of resources, are better able to attract a higher percentage of graduate students.

But for whatever reason, we haven't achieved that yet, and the day of reckoning *is* coming. So we formed a task force. The task force came up with a number of recommendations. I think it was really worthwhile because it involved both the senate and the administration. We put in place some of those recommendations already. For example, we eliminated nonresident tuition for first and second-year graduate students to be more competitive. And for years three through five—it's based on systemwide policy—students don't pay non-resident tuition if they've passed their qualifying exam. So theoretically, our graduate students can get five years without paying non-resident tuition. It's a good deal. It helps us recruit students. It does cost the campus some money. But it hopefully will be jumpstarting our graduate programs.

So that's an example of a task force that can be really impactful. One of the other things that the senate really played a key role in was the reorganization of Student Affairs. When I came in as chancellor, I will admit to you, I was concerned about the vice chancellor of student affairs who'd been serving for some years, Francisco Hernandez. M.R.C. really liked him, I know, and ultimately hired him in Hawaii. I had misgivings about Francisco, because I found him very non-transparent. I really liked some of his ideas. He was the guy who first conceived of what we now call Project Scout. I think that was a very worthwhile project and he deserves a lot of credit for having thought of it and basically brought it into fruition. But I didn't find him the most transparent or easy to work with person in the world. So I didn't know, when I came in as chancellor, whether or not there would be a problem there. I thought there might be. I do know that Denice really didn't like him, so much so that when she hired Ashish, she made clear to Ashish, who had been the acting vice chancellor of student affairs at UC San Francisco, that one of his major jobs was to keep tabs on Student Affairs.

When I came in, of course I told him that wasn't his major job, that I didn't want a Soviet system here. (Reti laughs) But I just wanted to acknowledge Denice's feelings. I think Francisco also knew Denice's feelings, because within literally a week or so of my arriving as acting chancellor, he informed me that he was leaving to go to Hawaii. That had obviously been in the works for some time. I thought that was a good thing. That relieved my concerns about working with him. I thought he might do very well in Hawaii, so I thought this was a win/win.

So we installed Jean-Marie Scott. Jean-Marie had been in charge of housing. I always found her, at least from my senate position, to be very transparent and willing to talk to people about stuff. She's also an extremely competent administrator, which she's

demonstrated many times. So we installed her as the acting vice chancellor of student affairs.

I really wanted someone in that role who would develop rapport and basically keep things from getting out of hand. I hate to use those words, but I'll just say it.

Reti: You're talking about demonstrations.

Blumenthal: Like demonstrations. And be able to work with students, and calm things down, and be able to relate to them in a variety of different levels.

So we did a national search for a new vice chancellor. Jean-Marie was in the job for about a year. We did have some awkward incidents that year, but you could hardly blame her. We've had awkward incidents every year. But I was hoping that, somehow if we hired the right person, maybe that would have a positive effect.

So we interviewed some candidates. Jean-Marie herself was a candidate and one of the other candidates was Felicia McGinty, who came to us from Penn State. I remember just before I interviewed Felicia, Dave Kliger came to my office and he said, "You're really going to like this candidate." So I interviewed her and I really did like her. I thought she was really smart. I thought she was very student-oriented. I thought she had a good head on her shoulders. I liked the fact that she brought diversity to senior management. I thought she was really committed to the goals of the campus. So I was very, very optimistic. We hired her. Felicia remained in the position for about three years, after which time she moved on.

In those days, since M.R.C.'s time, at least, Student Affairs handled all of housing; Student Affairs handled all of Admissions and Financial Aid; Student Affairs handled all of sports,

all of the resource centers, all of the student tutoring stuff—all of that was handled thorough the vice chancellor of student affairs, not to mention the student organizations.

The senate decided that they really wanted to recommend some major changes. And the most important one that they wanted to recommend was that we remove Admissions and Financial Aid from Student Affairs and place it under the vice provost of undergraduate education. We had some resistance to doing that because you should always be resistant to change, not necessarily opposed to change. By that time, Alison had become the EVC. I did want Alison to get into the job and feel comfortable before we made a major change. But the senate really wanted to do that, and frankly, their arguments were right. So I made the decision to move Admissions and Financial Aid to Undergraduate Education. From the senate's perspective, this is an academic thing for the students and to have an academic thing live under a vice chancellor who is herself not an academic seemed to them to be really weird and unacceptable, even though it's done on many campuses.

Reti: Well, I was going to ask you that: in the other UCs, how is this organized?

Blumenthal: I think at that time, most of them still had it under their vice chancellor of student affairs. And at UCOP, it was under the vice president of student affairs. But I actually thought the reasoning was a good one. On Admissions, we were, and frankly I think we still are, a poster child campus for how admissions policy and practice between the Academic Senate and the administration has worked well. There's been relatively little friction there. And so I thought as a matter of principle, that was a good thing to do.

And then, at the same time, we had just completed our comprehensive settlement agreement. And I was worried about housing. I tried to get assurances that we could meet a commitment of housing two-thirds of all the new students on campus. And I was very frustrated because I never got what I felt was a clear, understandable, number or answer

that was justified by data. So to some extent, in my signing that agreement, there was an element of that that was a little bit of a leap of faith. That was the one I never felt comfortable about. And so, for me, in thinking about the future and thinking about housing and the economics of housing, it just seemed to me that leaving this under a vice chancellor of student affairs seemed to me folly. That's not what we look for in a vice chancellor, someone able to run a housing operation. What we're looking for is someone who can work with students. By then, we were just at the point of transitioning from Tom Vani to Sarah Latham. I felt that our business vice chancellors were smart people who knew how to run a business, and to some extent, housing is a business. I felt much more comfortable having this in the portfolio of somebody who knows how to run an organization or an operation of that magnitude. So moving housing from Student Affairs to BASS was, to me, a slam dunk, just like moving Admissions and Financial Aid was.

That left the other stuff: Athletics, OPERS, Health Service Center, Tutoring Services, Student Organizations, stuff like that. And somehow we decided, Alison ultimately decided, that she would have the dean of students report to her, which I think was, in retrospect, a mistake. We've changed that now. We decided that because the issue of success of students was so important and it involved academic things as well, that rather than hiring a traditional vice chancellor of student affairs and giving them a reduced portfolio, wouldn't it be better to hire a faculty member to be a vice provost of student success, and basically put much of the portfolio involving students under his or her purview. Some of the stuff would go to the dean of students, who would report to Alison, which I had misgivings about, because I thought Alison already had too many direct reports.

That was the model, and I liked it. We found there were a couple of other places in the country that did the same thing with great success. I liked the concept of it. so that's what we did. I'm kind of proud that we did that.

How has it worked? Well, the first challenge was, maybe three years later, I was in San Francisco with Kelly doing something fun and I get a call from my office saying the president wanted to see me and could I go over to UCOP that day. So I went over to UCOP and I saw Janet. Janet was all in arms about the fact that we'd eliminated the vice chancellor of student affairs position. We were the only campus to do that.

So I went into a long explanation. I basically told her all the stuff I just told you. I talked it through and I said, "We're providing the same services. It's framed differently, but I'm much more confident in the way we've framed it. I like what we've done." We talked it through. It turned out that the main thing she was objecting to was not the way we were organized on campus. She was objecting to how we were represented at systemwide meetings of vice chancellors of student affairs because we'd been sending our dean of students, who had not been an active participant, and who had not reported back to the campus very effectively. And I expected that reporting to take place. So we changed it and had Jay, instead, go to the systemwide meetings. That basically solved Janet's problem.

Having said all that, you could ask me now a decade later, what do I think of all of this? I think that moving Admissions and Financial Aid to Undergraduate Education was a great success. It was the right thing to do for the right reasons. Senate faculty should be interacting with an academic administrator on those issues. I think, by and large, we've done an excellent job. Yes, we've had a few wrinkles. We one year admitted too many students. But look at what we did with transfer students. That basically fell on them and they really came through in a way that exceeded my expectations by a large amount in

achieving that goal, a three-year goal, and achieving it in one year. I view that as a great success.

With regard to housing, there's no question in my mind that the only way we could have come up with a plan on Kresge College and on Student Housing West is by having it run through Sarah's shop. Frankly, I'm not sure any student affairs vice chancellor could have done it. I think it took someone with the special qualities that Sarah has. But leaving that issue aside, there's no question that this would not have been doable under a vice chancellor of student affairs.

With regard to the third leg, well, as I already indicated, we decided that we had made a mistake by having the dean of students report to the EVC. So we have corrected that. But even so, I'm not sure I would call that third leg yet a great success. Jay is a great guy. He's really committed. He works hard. I'm not sure we have another faculty member on campus who would be a good candidate for that role [after he moves on]. I could be wrong. But if so, I don't know who that person is, offhand. But I again could be wrong.

And I worry that we've created an expectation as a faculty member. Do we want to recruit externally for a faculty position that may or may not work? We're using rare faculty positions then. So I have second thoughts about that third leg of the decision and wonder sometimes whether we should bring in a student affairs professional to occupy that role, even if they're not a faculty member. The advantage of the faculty member is one, she relates to the senate better. Two, more importantly even, that person, part of their job is to ensure student success, through tutoring, through providing services. And I think, who better to do that than a faculty member? But there are other aspects of the job that are not faculty-related, which would be a challenge to any random faculty member. A faculty member at any campus could be a vice chancellor of student affairs. And that has

happened. San Diego had one for years that was a faculty member. But they don't come a dime a dozen. Good candidates are not that frequent.

Reti: This is part of a larger issue: faculty don't come with training in administration. They're academics. Some, like yourself, really love administration and have a talent for it. But many do not.

Blumenthal: Right. So I don't know that this is sustainable. I think it will be interesting to see. So we put together another task force to look at student success and they will issue a report. I think what I'm saying is it wouldn't break my heart if we went back to the vice chancellor of student affairs model, with this much more limited purview of student success issues, not including housing and not including admissions. That wouldn't break my heart if they changed the title, or changed who the leader of that role was. It would break my heart if we went back to a model in which we reaggregated some of those other things back into student affairs.

I might add, as a parenthetical comment, having sat through many Council of Chancellors meetings, if there was one administrator on the various campuses who was held in low regard by chancellors, it is the vice chancellor of student affairs. I'm not sure I've ever heard a positive thing said about a vice chancellor of student affairs at one of these meetings, and I've heard a hell of a lot of negative things. Some chancellors feel that that vice chancellor is an advocate for students, rather than for the administration. Some of them feel that they have their own agendas and they aren't team players. And there's a whole host of things that vice chancellors of student affairs are accused of. I can't speak to the truth of those allegations, but I just can speak to the fact that they exist. And when I pointed out that I no longer have a vice chancellor of student affairs, it gives me almost godlike status among my peers.

Reti: Why? Does this have something to do with the philosophical idea that the University of California is a research university, and undergraduates are not important?

Blumenthal: No, I don't think so. I think it really boils down to the team issue. A lot of chancellors feel that they have a team that works well together, but their vice chancellor of student affairs is not a member of the team. They have their own agendas.

Reti: Mm-hmm. And that doesn't relate to the structural kinds of ways in which students don't fit into UC's research agenda, that students have different interests?

Blumenthal: A vice chancellor of student affairs might have zero interest in the fact that the campus does research. But I would expect any member of the administration to understand and relate to the fundamental mission of the university, which is research, teaching and public service.

Reti: Yeah. So that's just something you've observed.

Blumenthal: It's something I've observed. It's always been amusing to observe it, in some ways, because it's a much stronger reaction than I ever would have guessed.

I want to say that the senate has been extremely helpful. Whenever we hire vice chancellors or vice provosts, or people of that nature, not only do faculty members serve on the search committees, but the Senate Executive Committee puts together a group to interview separately all the people, and they will issue their own report, in addition to the search committee report that I'll get at the end of the day. Almost every hire I do collaboratively with the EVC, whoever the EVC is. I will tell you that over the years, I've tended to be in remarkable agreement with the senate input on senior management, probably more so than almost any other group. I've tended to agree with the senate

viewpoint. I sometimes think the senate overvalues experience, compared to what I think, but, you know, reasonable people can differ. By and large, they've done a fantastic job.

Reti: Okay. Great. Shall we move on to systemwide?

Blumenthal: Yeah. Let's talk about the systemwide senate as chancellor. That's been a pleasure for me. As a former senate chair, I have a lot of stake in the systemwide senate, an interest in it. So it's been my habit over these thirteen years to have dinner with the chair and vice chair of the senate before every Academic Council meeting. We sometimes miss one for whatever reason, but I would say 80 percent, 90 percent of the time, we do it. It's been really helpful to me as a chancellor to hear what's rumbling around at the Office of the President because the senate leaders hear it first. And it's really helpful for them to understand what's going to be discussed at the Council of Chancellors and what's going on at that end. In a way, it's kind of sad, because I shouldn't have to be this conduit. There should be a much simpler conduit, and there isn't.

Reti: Right. So it should be structurally institutionalized and not dependent upon someone like you, who has had this history, making this happen.

Blumenthal: Right. And I'm going to disappear, so it's not going to happen again. In the case of the staff advisor to the regents, we arranged for Kim Wilcox⁴⁰⁷ to take up where I left off. But I don't think anyone's going to step up and do what I've been doing with the senate. That exchange of information has been really crucial.

Composite Benefit Rates

And I don't believe I've talked to you about composite benefit rates as an example of this communication. This is a part of UC Path. As they were instituting UC Path, it was originally proposed that when we calculate, for example, on contracts and grants, what

the benefit costs are for hiring a faculty or staff member, that instead of charging what it costs, under this new system we would charge a unique percentage of the salary that would cover, on average, all of the benefit rates. So some people would pay more than they should; some people would pay less than they should, but there would be one number that would fit all—one size fits all. There was a lot of pushback on that, because everybody's different. Faculty are different than staff. Medical faculty are different than other faculty. I can just go on and on and on. We had probably two dozen meetings where we discussed composite benefit rates, all told, two dozen CoC meetings. It was a big, huge issue. But we were told that you could only have one rate, and then maybe two rates. And then we learned that UC Davis had negotiated five rates with the federal government, so clearly you could have five. So nobody believed anymore what we were hearing from the Office of the President, about what the federal government would or would not allow. Many of us just felt that they weren't telling us the truth.

My big issue was that the models that they developed for composite benefit rates were really negative for Santa Cruz, negative in the following sense: the total amount of money that the campus would have wasn't changed at all by instituting composite benefit rates. But it did move money around in such a way that for our campus, it moved money out of core funds into other kinds of funds. And our campus is core fund-poor, so we really need more core funds. So it was doing a very bad thing for us. A lot of that had to do with the large grant we had from NASA. But there were a few other reasons as well. They were somewhat obscure, but they were real. And every time they ran a model of composite benefit rates, we always came out major losers in terms of the distribution of money on our campus.

So I kept complaining over and over and over again. And they kept saying, "We'll fix it. Don't worry. We'll fix it. We'll fix it." And every time they ran a new model, it wasn't fixed.

Then they ran out of money to run models because they hired this outside consulting firm to run their models of composite benefit rates. It cost them hundreds of thousands of dollars to run a model and they ran out of money. It was so bad that UCSF decided that they would fund more models of composite benefit rates for the entire system because we needed to do more.

I kept complaining over and over and over again. And actually at one point, Mark Yudof pulled me aside and said, "You've got to stop complaining about this." But I felt that I had to represent the campus and the campus' interest.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the senate was getting involved. And they were concerned primarily about two things, one of which I completely agree with, the other one of which I'm not sure I agree with. I, at least had sympathy with it, but I'm not sure I completely agree. The one I completely agreed with was pension. The senate pointed out that faculty who worked during the summer on a federal research grant do not get additional pension benefits as a result of that summer salary. It has no effect on their pension. Therefore, they argued, it is totally unfair to charge them a composite benefit rate which includes in part a contribution to the retirement system which in fact they get no benefit from.

Reti: Sure. So they're being taxed, so-called, without getting any benefit from it.

Blumenthal: Right. I completely agreed with that argument. The argument I only partially agreed with had to do with health benefits. They argued that faculty without summer support still got twelve months of health benefits, and therefore to charge health benefits to summer salary was unfair, because those faculty would have gotten it anyway. That one, I think, is a weaker case. It's not a zero case, but it's a weaker case. But I certainly sympathize with the first one, and the first one was actually the biggie. There were a few other more minor issues, but those were the big ones.

Anyway, this discussion had been roiling for a long time. The senate was really unhappy because they couldn't get data, because the data all went to this company that generated the models. And the models were completely un-transparent. The discussion went on month after month after month. And the only major change was eventually UC Controller Peggy Arrivas⁴⁰⁸ would grudgingly agree that we might be able to have five different rates, and then maybe six. It was just ridiculous.

Janet comes in as president. It's still going on and on and on. And then, one month at a chancellor's meeting, Janet announced that she was sick and tired of this and that next month we're going to make a final decision at our meeting on composite benefit rates, and it was going to go off our agenda, never to be seen again. (Reti laughs)

So a month goes by. The night before the CoC meeting, I had dinner with Bill Jacob,⁴⁰⁹ who was the chair of the senate. Bill is a mathematician from Santa Barbara. He is one of the most mild-mannered people you'll ever meet. I can't remember who his vice chair was at the time. I think it may have been Mary Gilley. Anyway, we had dinner, a very nice dinner. And in the course of the dinner, I very casually mentioned, because I'd read all the documents for the next day and that I was surprised by the senate's position on composite benefit rates.

He said, "What do you mean? Why are you surprised?"

I said, "Well, it wasn't exactly what I thought you guys were going to say."

He said, "What do you mean?"

I tried to explain it to him. He got really confused. So I said, "Look, I'll just send you that part of the packet." So I got on my phone and I emailed him that attachment. It was

labeled “Senate’s position on composite benefit rates.” He said he’d read it as soon as he got home.

So we finished dinner. I went to my hotel. I went and got myself a cup of tea to settle in to do some work and look at my email. There’s an email all in capital letters from Bill, saying, “THAT IS NOT THE SENATE POSITION ON COMPOSITE BENEFIT RATES.” He was furious. I called him up. We talked about it. He felt it was a complete and utter misrepresentation of the senate’s position. It was not a senate document at all. It was written by somebody within the administration.

Anyway, so what the hell do I do? So the next morning I went in early. I tried to get in to see the president, but she was in meetings. So I went to see her chief of staff—which I often did—Seth Grossman, who later during Survey Gate was thrown to the wolves. But Seth and Janet were close, and I knew that speaking to Seth was as good as speaking to Janet. I basically told him what had happened the previous night. I wondered whether he was going to be mad at me for sharing a document with the senate. But it struck me that I could live with it if he was angry with me. It seemed to me the right thing to do. And I basically said to him, “Look, Janet’s still pretty new. She’s not a faculty member. This is an issue that is going to infuriate the senate. It’s not just a question of deciding against their viewpoint; it’s a question of not even considering their viewpoint. They are going to be furious. And this is the kind of issue that could undermine her whole presidency.”

Reti: Because it’s about shared governance.

Blumenthal: Right. That’s right. So I said, “Janet’s got to do something. This is just not right.”

So we get to the CoC meeting and I’m hoping that he’s communicated with her, which he had. Peggy got up to present the data on composite benefit rates. When she made her

presentation, I basically said, “Look, my understanding is that what’s labeled as the senate position is not the senate position at all.”

She said, “No, no. That’s not true. This is the senate position.”

I said, “No. It really isn’t. I talked last night to the chair of the senate, and he assures me it is *not* the senate position.” So Peggy and I got into a little bit of an argument about that. And I turned to Janet and I said, “You cannot go forward without fundamental senate consultation.”

So she said, “Okay. We’re going to wait another month.” It turned out this was maybe the only occasion in thirteen years in which the Academic Council met on the same day as the Council of Chancellors. Usually they’re a week or two apart. But for some reason, on that day, the council was meeting downstairs. So she asked Pradeep and me to go down to the council and tell them of her decision to delay.

So I went down with Pradeep. It was kind of funny, because I just barged into the council meeting, which is kind of a no-no. But they all knew me, so they didn’t mind at all. They were very nice about it. We told them what had been decided and that Janet said that they could get whatever data they wanted in the next month, but that they had a month and no more. So that was fine. We all agreed that was the way forward. I agreed I would sit on a couple of calls over the next couple of days in which they specified the data they wanted. I agreed to do that. I was in New York and I was on one of those calls where they were asking for data. It was so awkward because I was in a cab from the airport in New York, going through tunnels.

Reti: Oh, God. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But I didn't have a real role other than to make sure that this was all happening. So they got the data. In the course of the month, Bill got the data. He wrote an Excel program to actually analyze all the data from all of the campuses for all of the job categories. He did it himself. I'm sure he had help from other people in the senate, but basically he was the lead programmer. And they created a meta-model. So that unlike the consultants that had been hired who did one model at a time, and you paid an arm and a leg for it, he, for a cost of zero dollars, created a meta model that allowed him to run an infinite number of models at no cost. So they did. They ran a gazillion models, the senate folks did. They analyzed their results and they came up with a whole new set of recommendations for how to do composite benefit rates based upon their analysis. They brought it to the next chancellors meeting.

So the chancellors all met and again, we heard from Peggy about what she wanted to see us do. Then we heard from the senate about what they wanted us to do. We adopted all of the senate recommendations, except for the ones dealing with the medical schools because the UC Path people told us we could not implement that particular algorithm. It was not doable under the UC Path that was being developed. So we did everything we could possibly do that the senate wanted us to.

It was kind of funny afterwards. Janet was very nervous because she had to go talk to the senate folks and tell them what we had decided. She was sure they were going to concentrate on what we weren't doing. I kept pointing out that we did 98 percent of what they wanted. They were going to be overjoyed. I was, of course, right.

There are several points in that story. One is, you can do a whole lot better if you actually consult in a meaningful way with the senate. But the senate sometimes can really produce major value-added in decision making. They have real expertise they can bring to the

table. Also, you shouldn't always trust everything you get. And I think the last thing, maybe even the most important, is the importance of communication, because had Bill and I not had dinner together that night, can you imagine what might have happened?

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: See, I have lots of good, fun, troublemaker stories. (Reti laughs) Oh, and I think my final comment about this at the CoC meeting was the one I really liked best. My final comment was, "Thank God. CBR can now go back to being Cosmic Background Radiation."

Reti: (laughs) That's great. An astrophysics joke.

Blumenthal: Well, it's also composite benefit rate.

Reti: No, I know. I get it.

Blumenthal: Another thing I was asked to do was to serve on the search committee for the new provost. Years earlier, Mark Yudof had asked me to do the interviews of the two finalists for the CFO position for the university. I probably mentioned that. But Janet asked me to be on the search committee for the new provost when Aimeé Dorr stepped down. So I agreed to do that. It was an awkward committee because it was chaired by Seth Grossman, her chief of staff, which is why I keep saying they really were joined at the hip. I mean, a non-academic in charge of hiring the provost? Anyway, we did it. We put together a search committee. I thought it was a very good search committee. She charged us to do an internal UC search, essentially without a search firm.

So we put out the word. I talked to a few people about potentially being candidates. I did call the person who was the EVC at Santa Barbara. I felt like he might have been a good choice. I talked to a few other people. But the one person I really tried to get was Michael

Brown. And as you know, Michael and I talk a lot. I mean, probably we've averaged once a week since I've been chancellor.

Reti: Yes, you did talk about close you are as colleagues.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Michael, by then, was the dean of Extension at Santa Barbara and he'd done some really great work there. So I really tried to persuade him to think about this because I'd long wanted him to have a more serious role in higher education. I think he wanted it, at least in principle, as well. So we had a long talk about applying. I kept assuring him that he would be a serious candidate, which he wasn't sure about, but which I was sure about.

At the end of the day, he decided not to apply. His wife grew up in Santa Barbara. They have strong ties there and they have a son who's still living at home in Santa Barbara. So there were good personal reasons why that would not be quite so appealing. But I really did push hard, and unsuccessfully.

When the search committee met, it was interesting that on the search committee was the then-current chair of the senate, who was Jim Chalfant. The committee also included a guy from Irvine who was their vice chancellor for student affairs. He'd been vice chancellor of student affairs there for a number of years. He's now the president of one of the CSUs. Both of them knew Michael well. I reported that I'd tried to twist Michael's arm to apply. They told me, "Go back and try again. And don't come back unless you succeed."
(laughter)

Reti: "Don't come back." (laughs)

Blumenthal: The guy from Irvine, it turned out, had been a college friend of Michael's. They had both gone to college together. Jim, of course, knew him through senate service.

And I've known Michael forever. So I went back and I had more conversations with Michael. I think Jim called him as well. Ultimately, we persuaded him to apply. So he did apply. And of course he was one of those we chose to interview. I will tell you, we interviewed a bunch of people and Michael's interview was just way, head and shoulders above any of the other interviews. So at the end of the day, when the interviews were done, there were only two candidates we forwarded, and Michael was heads and shoulders above the other one.

It was slam dunk to get the job. I've got to say, it's been a pleasure working with Michael. He has just done a fantastic job. He has raised Academic Affairs within OP to be much more important than it was under Aimeé Dorr, much, much more important. I think that is to his credit. He's not afraid of saying what he thinks. When they came into the job, they were going to make major cuts at UCOP and Academic Affairs was going to take the brunt of that. He basically came in and said, "No way. This is a university. What we do is academic. The major cuts should come from other places." And he prevailed.

Reti: Wow.

Blumenthal: That's Michael. You can see why I like him so much. So among the things I'm proud of, I am proud of lobbying to get Michael made BOARS chair; I'm proud of having lobbied to get Michael elected chair of the senate; and I'm proud of my role in getting him to the provost's position. I think I've done good things in all three of those situations.

Reti: Yeah. Wonderful. Well, is that a good place to stop for today?

Blumenthal: Yeah.

The Ten Campus Report

Reti: So today is May 30, 2019. This is interview number thirty-six with Chancellor George Blumenthal. Today we're going to start by talking about the *Ten Campus Report*.

Blumenthal: Yeah. The *Ten Campus Report*.⁴¹⁰ So first, a little bit of a reminder—I've discussed some of this already, so I won't go into it in detail—but there was this state audit of the Office of the President that happened about two years ago. That's the audit that led to SurveyGate, which we have discussed. And it also led to severe criticism of the UCOP budget, with the allegation from the auditor that there were large parts of the budget that were not actually affirmatively approved by the regents, the implication being that there was hanky-panky. But there really wasn't hanky-panky. Yes, certain things weren't approved explicitly, but that was a process issue. It wasn't an issue of inappropriate behavior.

And seemingly, the concern over the financials of the UCOP budget stemmed originally from concern about the assessment model. In that model, UCOP has been funded in recent years by the university by giving all the money to the campuses and then assessing the campuses as an assessment to bring it back to UCOP to pay for UCOP. By agreement, that money could come in any form. We've talked about that already as well. But this led, as we said, to direct state funding for UCOP, which I've already criticized, so I won't criticize it again. But when all of that got done, what was supposed to happen next?

Well, one of the things that happened next—and it's kind of still going on—is the UC response to a set of recommendations made by the auditor. UCOP, I suspect wisely, said they would meet all of those recommendations, although I'm not sure how wise it was, because some of them weren't the most brilliant recommendations in the world, and are much more expensive and painful than useful. But nevertheless, I think there was a PR

issue by that point, and UCOP had very little choice but to say we'll do them all. And so, the auditor has been keeping tabs, and UCOP has put a lot of work and a lot of money, and a lot of effort into meeting all of the recommendations by the state auditor and doing it in a timely way so that all the responses come in on time. And every now and then, they and the state auditor snipe at each other about whether or not everything is timely or not. But the point is, they're doing a good job and they're doing a lot of work, which probably is not leading to all that much benefit for the system. But be that as it may, we live in a political world and we have to live in it. We have to adapt to it.

Having said all of that, the first thing that happened after the efforts began to meet all of the audit recommendations was that the Office of the President brought in a consulting group, the Huron Group,⁴¹¹ to examine the Office of the President and to do a report on the Office of the President to see where they could make cuts, where they could reorganize, how they might be more efficient, etcetera, etcetera. And so the Huron Group kind of swarmed all over the Office of the President for a while. And they ultimately issued a report, which was interesting to read. They had many, many recommendations. I was not overwhelmingly impressed with the report. Overall, the report suggested a few deletions of offices within the Office of the President, but only very few, and in fact overall ended up proposing more expansion of services in the Office of the President than deletions. And partly that was based on a comparative survey they did of other systems around the country to assess what functions were at the central office and what functions were on the campuses. And they concluded that for a system our size, the number of functions within the Office of the President was abnormally small.

When you looked at the Huron Report, there were relatively few things that they recommended that could lead to significant savings, really quite few. If you were looking to the Huron Report to save bucks, it wasn't going to happen. But a lot of the

recommendations of the Huron Report were of a nature that they would shift functions out of the Office of the President's budget to somewhere else and therefore, it would give the *appearance* that the Office of the President was shrinking. I'll give some examples.

So for example, one of the recommendations—one we ultimately did adopt—was that the EAP program, the Education Abroad Program, which is physically located in Santa Barbara, off campus, but which is overseen by the Office of the President, that it be shifted from the Office of the President to the Santa Barbara campus to operate for the system, so that Santa Barbara would run EAP for the whole system, much as Santa Cruz runs Lick Observatory. It would be a systemwide thing, but it wouldn't be run by UCOP, and therefore the funding for it would be off the top rather than a part of the UCOP budget.

Reti: Oh, so it would not be that the Santa Barbara campus would be paying for it—

Blumenthal: No, no, no. Essentially, all of the campuses would be paying for it, but it wouldn't be channeled through the Office of the President.

Reti: Right. So the net result is still the same budget, but it's just not showing as an Office of the President line item.

Blumenthal: Yes. Correct. It would be the same budget, not necessarily any change in function or anything like that. It's just that the organization chart would be different. So it would be governed by the Santa Barbara campus.

Now that had some implications and some concerns. I don't think the senate liked that particularly, because their view was that this was a systemwide thing and should have systemwide oversight. Ultimately, I supported it, somewhat reluctantly. But I did, because it is located in Santa Barbara; it was not likely to move to anywhere else. Secondly, its distance from UCOP made UCOP oversight somewhat less than you might have expected.

Third, the chancellor at Santa Barbara, Henry Yang, put together a plan involving an oversight board, or oversight function, that had representatives from all ten campuses, so that, in fact, although it would be administered by the Santa Barbara campus, there would be a governance process that included representation from all ten campuses.

Reti: And you were supporting it as part of your function as chancellor here?

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: Because the chancellors were voting on this? Or just more advisory?

Blumenthal: So, let me just interrupt myself for a brief moment—when the Council of Chancellors meet, we don't vote. I mean, I may tell you in these pages that eight of the ten chancellors supported something. And occasionally Janet will ask for a vote. But it's not a binding vote. There's no minutes. There's no vote in the formal sense, because every issue that we talk about is fundamentally an administrative issue and we all report to the president. And on so every issue, she gets a hundred votes to our one. So there is no vote. She's the decision maker.

Reti: Right. So when you say you supported it, you mean there was this consensus that the chancellors would support this.

Blumenthal: Yes. Exactly. We are often governed by consensus. When there's division, we might talk it out. She might even ask for a vote just to get a sense of how we feel. But it isn't a formal vote. But there was a consensus, kind of an okay this makes sense consensus to do this. So we all agreed that we would do this. So this was a program that was then officially moved from the Office of the President budget to the Santa Barbara campus. And it was funded through, I guess, in a sense, assessments to the campuses, but it doesn't appear in the UCOP budget anymore, so to the eyes of the world, it looks like

they've made a cut in the UCOP budget, when in fact nothing got cut. We've just rearranged the deck chairs on the Titanic.

So that was fine. I don't see a real problem there and it had some political advantage to doing it.

There was a whole pile of recommendations, and I'm not going to go through them all. I just want to give you some examples. Another recommendation from the Huron Report was that UC Press be moved to a campus. The argument there was that this was an academic function. There's no need for it to be at the Office of the President. The campuses do academics. The Office of the President doesn't do academics. So why not have it associated with a campus and let a campus do it? I think the original idea was that they would open it up for a competition to let the campuses compete. And then somehow it evolved into—well, probably it's going to go to UCLA. So it looked like it was going to go to UCLA. I might add, there were other functions that they were talking about moving to campuses, including oversight of all research grants.

And at the time this discussion was going on, I had a conversation with Michael Brown, who had just come in as provost. We were talking about the possibility that Santa Cruz might put in a bid to house all of the research grant programs within UCOP. They were really interested in moving stuff out to the campuses. Michael and I talked about it and I expressed a willingness to bid for this and to do this, as long as the compensation were reasonable, as long as we didn't lose money on the deal. But I also told Michael, and actually he agreed with me, that this didn't make sense. Doing this just really didn't make sense. This was a systemwide program. It really needed to be overseen systemwide. Otherwise, if it let's say went to Santa Cruz or any other campus, and then there were

competitions for grants, everyone would scrutinize the grants that went to Santa Cruz in ways that they wouldn't otherwise be questioned.

Reti: And same thing if UC Press is publishing work by Santa Cruz faculty and UC Press is located at that particular campus—Santa Cruz or UCLA or whatever—might there would be suspicions?

Blumenthal: Yeah, that's true. Although for UC Press, it might be a little bit easier. In the case of research grants, grants get refereed and reviewed, but ultimately decisions are made by administrators. In the case of UC Press, I think the decisions are ultimately made by a senate committee. Their board is actually a senate committee. So there is a little bit of insulation there, is what I'm trying to say. Anyway, in the case of UC Press, I thought it was going to go to UCLA and it wasn't even worth talking about seriously for the campus. But ultimately, I think the decision was made not to do that.

There was a whole list of those things. Again, I'm not going to take you through the whole report. But there were two biggies that they proposed. I think it's worth taking a minute to talk about the two biggies.

The first of the two biggies was ANR, Agriculture and Natural Resources. For me this has been an issue, because ANR is fundamentally supporting three campuses: Davis, Berkeley, and Riverside. And we have a very active agroecology program; we have a path-breaking organic farm; we have a training program on campus—all of those things. We've never really been able to compete for funding with those three campuses, because they hold that privileged position. The proposal from the Huron Report was that ANR be detached from UCOP and placed in an independent 501C3 type of organization that's organized to be separate from the University of California, per se, but in a sense funded by the University of California. So the money would still be there; the money would still

go doing the same stuff it already was. But it would be a completely independent organization with an independent governance structure. And it would be off the books of UCOP. Huron was going to try to get stuff off UCOP's books.

Well, the vice president of ANR really loved that idea. Maybe she even recommended it to the Huron people. What the president finally decided to do, I think with the advice of the chancellors, was to appoint a task force to look at this issue and to report back on this. The task force had broader representation. The task force was chaired by David Marshall, the EVC at UC Santa Barbara, who was a good guy. And the task force had somebody pretty strong from our campus. I don't remember who it was. I'm sorry. And the task force had a couple of chancellors—it had Dorothy Leland⁴¹² and it had Carol Christ.⁴¹³

Reti: Oh. From Berkeley.

Blumenthal: From Berkeley. I did follow this pretty closely, because I was interested in this because of this issue of eligibility. So they went off and started meeting. From everything I heard, they were a good task force. David Marshall did a good job. They really ticked off the vice president of natural resources and the vice president of ANR. And ultimately, they wrote a report which did agree that there should be some oversight of ANR independent of the reporting structure to the president. So they said there should be some kind of a board that oversees it, but they didn't recommend that it be removed from UCOP. They didn't feel that that would be an effective way to do things. They also had language in there which suggested that ANR should be serving the whole UC system. So I was actually pretty happy with the ANR report at the end of the day.

Reti: And has that played out in terms of greater support for agroecology here at UCSC?

Blumenthal: (chuckles) So it's a fair question. We did get for the Santa Cruz campus a specialist—a specialist is like a faculty researcher—associated with one of our

departments. So yes, we did get some resources from them that benefit the campus. I don't think it's anywhere near as much resources as we should get, or that we deserve to get, and I don't know that that's made us eligible to compete yet for grants, or to compete for research funding with other campuses. All I want to do is compete. There has been some benefit, but the truth is, it's too soon to judge.

Reti: Right. I mean, and then there's a whole enormous big picture for this in terms of the support for conventional agriculture by land grant universities and the very small percentage that goes to organic farming research nationally. This is only one example of how that can get institutionalized.

Blumenthal: Yes. I do agree with that. But there's also been issues that have politicized this. In the last Jerry Brown budget, there was a line item added at the last minute in support of ANR. This was not requested by the Office of the President. The vice president of ANR has said that she did not request this line item. Many people don't believe that, because things don't just emerge out of the ether. I don't know where the truth lies, but there's a lot of suspicion that's developed about how ANR is operating. It's like every few years the suspicion rises to the breaking point. This is a troubled organization. It needs a makeover. (laughter) Okay. So that was one biggie from the Huron Report.

The other biggie was health sciences. And a proposal that all of health sciences—all of the hospitals, and the entire medical enterprise within UC—that its governance and the hospitals themselves be removed and put into a 501C3 that would operate independently of the Office of the President. There was even some justification there in that the people dealing with medical issues at the Office of the President were constrained; there were hiring freezes; they weren't able to hire all the people they needed to do some valuable things in terms of systemwide coordination, purchasing across the system for medical

centers, etcetera. So they do reasonable and sensible and worthwhile things and they were constrained by the rules and frustrated by the length of time it took the Office of the President to hire somebody because they didn't have a specialist in health science stuff, and the health science people get paid significantly more than anybody else.

So there were some legitimate issues. I don't want to minimize them at all. But the solution was like killing a gnat with a sledgehammer. It was a major change. Of course, that solution would also remove funding from the Office of the President's budget without necessarily changing anything. But it also could have profound implications for the relationships with the hospitals to the campuses on which they reside.

So this was a proposal in the Huron Report that I believe Jack Stobo, the vice president of the medical enterprise, I think he strongly supported this. He may have even been the one that suggested this to the Huron Report committee, I don't know. But my understanding is he strongly supported it. And I know that some chancellors were strongly opposed to it. Some chancellors were strongly in favor of it. My understanding is that Sam Hawgood thought it was a good idea. He was from San Francisco, UCSF. Pradeep Khosla, from San Diego, thought it was the worst idea he'd ever heard.

So Janet put together a task force, just as she did with ANR, to look at the health science thing. They had a gazillion meetings. She appointed somebody to chair that task force who was not a member of the University of California. And they had a bunch of meetings. I understand they were very interesting meetings. I did get regular reports, both from Robert May, the chair of the senate who was on that task force, and from Pradeep. The upshot of it was, after all was said and done, the decision was made not to do this, but they recognized that there were certain problems at the Office of the President, and they took the attitude that they should fix those problems at the Office of the President. There

were fixes they could do, for example, if they need more people in the health science enterprise in the Office of the President servicing the health centers—and if they don't have the money or the budget to do that because of the constraints on the UCOP budget—they could set up a separate assessment or tax on the health science campuses, to put together a separate source of funding, a separate fund, that would allow them to hire those people at the Office of the President. This was perfectly sensible and reasonable solution. They also decided, I think, to bring in a person to their HR office who deals with health affairs stuff. Again, a perfectly reasonable thing. But that doesn't involve killing that gnat with a sledgehammer. It involves killing it with a fly swatter. So they ended up, I thought, in a very sensible place. But it was a very meandering way to get there.

I might add that this solution also retained UCOP and regental oversight of the hospital system, which I think is important. For example, within a year, the UC medical enterprise proposed a merger with four Dignity hospitals (part of a Catholic hospital system). This made sense to Dignity because they had unused capacity (beds) and UCSF was already overcrowded with patients. But the medical enterprise was insufficiently sensitive to the implications of this arrangement for women's reproductive health and LGBTQ issues as well as UC physicians' ability to carry out all appropriate medical procedures without religion-based restrictions. So far, that merger has not occurred because of university-wide concern about these issues.

The Huron Report was initiated and carried out entirely by the Office of the President. They did report to the regents on what they were doing, but it was an internal UC thing.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the Board of Regents decided to get involved in this audit stuff. So the chair of the regents, George Kieffer, decided that the regents needed to be proactive in understanding and improving the relationship between the Office of the

President and the campuses. There was a separate task from the Huron Report, which looked at UCOP and what could we carve out of UCOP and put elsewhere. Kieffer's issue was more of a generic question of how are the campuses and the Office of the President getting along. In a sense, that's what the audit was supposed to get at.

And there was a lot of concern, particularly from Assemblyman Ting, who has not been a friend of the University; there was concern that he was going to initiate another audit to look at these issues in particular. So George, I think in a brilliant move, decided , to get an outside group to come in and look at the relationship between the Office of the President and the campuses. He did this in consultation with Ting, who agreed that this would mollify him. So they hired the auditing firm of Evashank and Sjoberg to do that. Evashank is a former California state auditor. He's very good. I respect him greatly. I think he's sensible and reasonable. He is everything that the current state auditor is not. And his partner, Sjoberg, seemed perfectly fine as well. So they were going to do a report on the relationship between the campuses and UCOP. In fact they went around and they interviewed people on all of the campuses, multiple people. I actually got interviewed twice by them. They interviewed me kind of at the very beginning, and they also interviewed me at the very end. So I got two bites of the apple. (Reti laughs)

They went to every campus. They interviewed a relatively broad group of people on the campuses. And they wrote a report, which became known as the Evashank-Sjoberg Report, or the Sjoberg-Evashank Report, which went to the regents. The Sjoberg-Evashank Report was interesting in a number of regards. It's worth reading. It isn't a super-duper long report. Unlike the Huron Report, which was actually a PowerPoint presentation, the Sjoberg-Evashank Report was an actual written document. It was maybe twenty or twenty-five pages long. And it was really kind of an essay on what are the issues between the Office of the President and the campuses? They tried to list the

issues that came up and talk about how people felt about them. They did not attempt—and they were very clear—they did not attempt to assess the seriousness of all of the criticisms, for example. I mean, there was some degree of assessment, “We heard this from only one person,” but they didn’t really try to do an assessment of seriousness. And they didn’t try to understand which ones were actionable, that you could do something about, and which ones you couldn’t. This was simply kind of a narrative evaluation of the relationship between UCOP and the campuses. And it had no recommendations. So unlike most reports, it had no end where they said, well, therefore we recommend the following fifteen things.

That report went to the regents. And having received that report, George realized that just getting the report wasn’t going to be enough. He needed to do more in order to mollify Ting. So he decided to convene a group to produce what became known as the *Ten Campus Report*. That group consisted of five people: George Kieffer himself (he chaired it); Janet Napolitano; Sam Hawgood, the chancellor from San Francisco; Carol Christ, from Berkeley, and me. So it was the five of us. And we met a whole lot. We may have met fifteen times, maybe even more. We met a bunch of times. A few of them were by Zoom. But we had a bunch of meetings. It was a very time-consuming activity. The good news is that the staffing for it was exceptionally good. Zoanne Nelson did a fantastic job, as did her staff, in serving the committee. And what was so fabulous was at the very beginning, Zoanne and her team went through the Sjoberg-Evashank Report, line by line, word by word, and they produced a table of every complaint in the Sjoberg-Evashank Report, whether it’s a big complaint or a little complaint, every single one. Maybe it was 100 things that people complained about. They gave us a table and we were able to organize it into different categories. We were trying to figure out exactly what we should do as a committee with all this stuff because the report itself didn’t have recommendations.

We realized that we needed to do a report, that this report would have to go to the regents, and that our report should contain actionable items. Some of those actionable items might be campus items; probably most of them would be UCOP items to implement; and a few might be regental items to do. And so we just literally worked our way through every single element of that table.

We also decided that one of the things we could produce that would be helpful is in an introductory section, a section on what is the role of the regents; what is the role of the president; and what is the role of the chancellors? Not that no one has ever done that. I mean actually, at the first meeting of the group, George assigned to me the task of doing a first draft of that. So I looked around and I discovered that this has been done a thousand times, and they're all different.

Reti: (laughs) Of course, it's probably an evolving thing, to some extent.

Blumenthal: No, I don't think it was that coherent. It really was all over the place in how they wrote it. So I drafted up something. They all criticized it. We went over it. We produced a draft of something we could all live with in terms of defining the role of the president. We thought that maybe it was useful to have that all in one place in a regental report.

Then we went through every single issue in that report. We classified them in terms of how serious they were, and we also classified them in terms of how fixable they were. Some things are serious but unfixable, and some things are easy to fix but not that serious. So we went through them one by one in agonizing detail, often calling in folks from the Office of the President to opine on them. Ultimately, we issued a report to the regents. We presented it jointly, the five of us. We found that a whole bunch of things that were called out in the Evashank-Sjoberg Report were just fine. There really wasn't a problem. Just

because somebody says, “There’s a problem with X,” doesn’t mean there’s a problem with X. There could be a hundred other people who think X is just fine. There were many, many things that fell into that category, at least, as far as we were concerned.

Reti: And is this report public someplace?

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. It’s completely public.⁴¹⁴

Reti: Okay. So we can footnote it.

Blumenthal: Yup.

Reti: Okay. Great.

Blumenthal: We found a bunch of things which were already in the process of being changed. An example of that was EAP, the Education Abroad Program. Again, there’s a bunch of other ones as well. We found that there were things that, as a result of the Huron Report, were being changed at the Office of the President internally. And our basic attitude was that if the Office of the President is already fixing it, let’s not get our nose in it.

I would add, however—in fact, I’ll just go back for a second and say that I was shocked at my first meeting with Sjoberg and Evashank. They came to campus; they met with me. One of the first things I said to them was, “Well, have you read the Huron Report?” And their answer was, they had not yet seen the Huron Report. I was kind of appalled. I was in this really awkward position, because I had a copy of the Huron Report. Part of me wanted to just hand it over to them and say, “How can you possibly do your job if you haven’t seen the Huron Report?” But a part of me said, this is probably inappropriate for me to do. They should get it from UCOP. And that’s what I did. I ultimately said, “Look, you’ve got to get this. It’s there. You should get it immediately.” And they did. But I

couldn't believe they were already doing their interviews without having been informed by the Huron Report to begin with. Anyway, a lot of the ultimate things that they identified were already being changed as a result of the Huron Report.

But there were a number of things that did need to be changed, and we did have active discussions about them. I don't remember all of them off the top of my head, but I remember a few of them. Some of them are symbolic in some ways of deeper issues. One of ones we had a really robust discussion of was gift limits. There are gifts above a certain threshold, when somebody gives a gift to a campus, that gift needs the approval of the Office of the President. That gift limit, I think, was something like five million dollars, which is remarkably low. I remember Carol's first reaction was, "Let's move it to 25 million." There was a lot of pushback from Janet about doing that. I remember I said, "Well, what if we did ten? Let's look at how many gifts we get that are below ten and above ten. That's a major change." And that's what we finally settled on. So it's for gifts, for endowed chairs, for naming opportunities. All of those had to be approved by the Office of the President. And now we've raised the threshold for that, with, I think, the comment that we should revisit the threshold at a later time. That's an example of the kind of thing we did, which I think actually can help the relationship between the Office of the President and the campuses.

The pushback came that a lot of the gifts, even the five million dollar gifts, we heard, had problems of one sort or another. Legal problems; various problems had cropped up in the ways gifts were structured, that the Office of the President had to fix before they were finalized. Again, I was the one who suggested the solution, which was post auditing. That is, do the gift, figure it out on campus, then send everything up to the Office of the President after it's done. If we did it wrong, tell us, and we'll never do it again. That was ultimately what was accepted.

Reti: Great.

Blumenthal: Another, a big, big area concerned outside professional activities. God, where to begin? The regents have had a policy for some years now that no senior manager may serve on more than two paid boards of directors. It used to be a larger number. But for some years now, it's been two. I knew that. Everybody knew that. Furthermore, there had to be approval by the president for joining any board of that was a paid board. And then Linda Katehi came along and a scandal erupted over her participation when she joined a third board without approval. She joined a board without getting prior approval from Janet Napolitano. That led to a series of events that ultimately led to her dismissal as chancellor.

When that happened, the board of regents adopted a new set of rules that applied, not just to chancellors, but all up and down the line to everybody at UC, a huge, huge number of rules. It had to do with board service, had to do with what you could do, what you couldn't do, what needed approval, what didn't need approval. And though I felt that the regental rules were an overreaction to the Katehi incident, there were people who interpreted those rules at the Office of the President who chose to interpret them in the most restrictive ways possible and the most zealous ways possible. I'm not saying they were zealots. I'm just saying they may have been covering themselves and overreacting. But for whatever reasons, the way the rules were manifested were really pretty bad. I'll give you two examples.

Example number one was me. I mean, I never get in trouble for anything. I wasn't serving on any paid boards. My only outside professional activity that involves money was writing a couple of books. I did serve on a whole bunch of nonprofit boards. I'd served on the Keck Board. I'd served on the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, the Monterey Bay Economic

Partnership, a whole bunch of community boards which I regarded as being a part of my role as chancellor.

Then around this time I was asked by the lieutenant governor—well, I was actually asked by former Senator Art Torres—if I would agree to join the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine board, a public board involving nonprofit public service. It was an appointment to be made by the lieutenant governor. So I talked to the lieutenant governor, or he talked to me about it. And ultimately, I agreed to be appointed. But by then, I needed approval. And I didn't get approval. I was kind of shocked and appalled and angry. And the reason was because every year I and all other senior managers have to fill out a form showing what outside activities we're involved with, even if they're unpaid, or even if they're public service, and the number of hours that we serve on each. I always listed everything, but I never paid any attention to the hours. I just put in numbers. I mean, who the hell cares? It's my job. I have a responsibility to make sure I do my job and that it doesn't detract from doing my chancellorial job to do these other service things. So I'd make up numbers and I never even thought about it.

Well, somebody came along and added up all the numbers and said, "You're spending too much of your time on outside activities," even though that wasn't true. This actually went to the regents and I was annoyed, to say the least. I actually had to have several back and forths through the Office of the President before I could join the Regenerative Medicine Board. What I had to do, ultimately, was resign from a couple of the boards I was on, which I was happy enough to do. I was on too many. I didn't actually attend meetings of some of those boards, but I was still writing down hours. So I just resigned from them, and that made it much cleaner. And they ultimately approved it. But it took a while. It took a couple of months to get this all resolved. I couldn't believe how stupid it was. And I wasn't even getting paid for any of this. This was all volunteer work on my part. Again,

my attitude is, if I was on too many outside activities and wasn't doing my job, then it's really the responsibility of my supervisor, for the president, to call me to task for that.

Reti: Exactly. That's shocking.

Blumenthal: You ain't heard nothing yet. So that for me was annoying. But if it was annoying for me with my low-key number of things, imagine how others felt, those who served on paid boards, where it took much longer to get approval because that required a much deeper level of scrutiny. And they were scrutinizing what you did. I mean, Linda got in trouble because she was on a textbook company board. So there were questions of conflicts of interest. They were really going whole hog in terms of what boards people were on.

So that was an issue. It was an issue I was very happy to raise with this group: overreach by the board and the Office of the President.

And then it also came to a head because Howard Gillman,⁴¹⁵ who was the chancellor at UC Irvine, and a notable expert on free speech, he wrote a book with the-then dean of his law school, who's now the dean of the Berkeley law school, a noted constitutional scholar, Erwin Chemerinsky.⁴¹⁶ They wrote a book together on free speech on campus. It became quite well known in academic circles very quickly. And one day, Howard called me up, and he was furious, because he had been informed by the Office of the President that it was illegal for him to have written that book and gotten royalties for that book, because it was an outside professional activity.

Reti: This is a research academic institution. How can that even be possible?

Blumenthal: I told you you're in for nothing yet.

Reti: What? (laughs)

Blumenthal: So Howard's point to me was just what you said, namely that we are all academics. We are all researchers. He was doing research. Writing books is a perfectly legitimate part of doing research. Therefore, this was crazy. And what he wanted to know from me was whether anyone had called me up and pounded me on the head because I had also published books during my time as chancellor.

Of course, I was shocked. No one had called me to the carpet. I would have been furious. I would have been just as furious as Howard. So we brought this immediately to the president at our next chancellor's meeting and said this was completely unacceptable. By the way, later on she wrote a book herself, which came out a few months ago. I think we may have pointed out to her that had she not agreed that we change the rules, she would have been subject to discipline for having violated the rules. (laughs) But we're academics. It's our job to be academics. Chancellors shouldn't stop being academics because they're chancellors. But that was the interpretation of the rules. The rules were ambiguous, but the Office of the President was interpreting them in the most restrictive way possible. You can see why people felt strongly about it.

Reti: Absolutely.

Blumenthal: So we wanted to relax the bureaucracy and put in place a more reasonable approach that wasn't so overwhelmingly bureaucratic because every year we had to put in lots of paperwork, spend a lot of time to figure this out, and then get approvals, for Christ's sake, by your supervisor, and in some cases, by your supervisor and your supervisor's supervisor. So for chancellors going onto a board, that meant approval by the president and by the regents, or at least by the chair of the regents—I'm not sure I remember which—but up two levels. It was nuts.

So we spent a fair amount of time thinking about how we might change that. George Kieffer, bless his soul, was completely onboard. He thought this was the dumbest stuff that had ever happened. And ironically—and this really annoyed me—when we started writing draft reports of the committee, they left off this section of the report. I called them on it. I said, “Why did you not include our discussion from last time on these outside activities?” The answer was, “Because the folks at UCOP are going to reexamine it and they’ll come up with a way of handling it.” I said, “No. This has got to be done by this committee. We’ve discussed it, we’ve come to conclusions, and we trump UCOP.” So, ultimately—

Reti: Right. I mean, you were given that charge.

Blumenthal: Well, we were led by the chair of the regents, for God’s sake.

Reti: Exactly.

Blumenthal: I’m just reporting here. It was really crazy. So we came up with a set of proposals and we knew that those proposals had to go to the regents. This was the only proposal that actually had to go to the regents. We had a bunch of recommendations but the rest of them just had to be approved by the Office of the President—and since the president was on the group, this was a slam dunk. But this one had to go to the regents and we had this very long, agonizing regents meeting discussing this stuff. I don’t know what to say. The regents got way too into it. At the end of the day, they approved it all with a slight modification. But it was rather crazy. One of the regents kept saying, “Well, I’ll approve all of this as long as we put a requirement that chancellors, when they do anything outside, they put it on their bio on their web page.” So I think that amendment passed. But, of course, not all chancellors have bios. There’s no requirement that chancellors have their bios on their webpage.

Reti: You have an extensive one.

Blumenthal: I do, but that doesn't mean it's— It's like passing a law that you have to do something on a webpage when in fact there's no webpage. So, that's what the regents ultimately did. I'm not going to object. They relaxed the rules, even if they added this silly one in addition, and after a seemingly long discussion. You might find it interesting to watch that on the web. Yeah, maybe not. It would take a lot of time.

Anyway, that was all approved and Howard was very grateful to us for doing this. (chuckles) I'm only laughing because one day he came to me and said, "How's that stupid committee going?" I said, "Well, one of the things we did is we clarified that you can write books."

And then there were a few other things that we tried to change and didn't, because of pushback from the president. For example, one of the issues that was raised in the report was the dual reporting of the Title IX officer. The president had decided that the Title IX officer would have a dual reporting to the chancellor of a campus and to the systemwide Title IX officer. And several of us, and frankly all of the chancellors pushed back on that. And it's worth saying a word about that. Prior to the Title IX issue, there have been only two people on campuses who have the dual reporting structure. One is the campus counsel, and the other is the campus auditor. The campus counsel reports jointly to the chancellor and to the university general counsel, Charlie Robinson. The auditor similarly has similar dual reporting function. And it has not been a problem. I've now hired three chief campus counsels and also did annual reviews of the chief campus counsel. And typically what happens is, I do this with Charlie Robinson. And the three times I've hired campus counsels, and I've made a choice of who I wanted, it turns out he was in complete agreement. So we were of one mind. In terms of performance evaluations, I think I was

more inclined to be a little bit more generous than he, at least early on in their careers. But that's a difference in style. That's not a big deal. But the hiring part is a big deal. And it just hasn't been a problem.

So it's worked. But if you think about it, dual reporting is not something you want to do a lot of. Because it isn't always going to work. If Charlie Robinson is the general counsel, great. But I could imagine people with whom I might have fundamental disagreements. So it's not something I would want to encourage. And then when Janet announced that the Title IX officers would all have a dual report, the chancellors pushed back on that, basically. I pushed back on it and argued that it's too much, that this is not a good idea.

Janet pushed back and said that she accepted our arguments in normal times. But in the time of the #MeToo movement, and with the state auditor doing audits of Title IX, and with this being a national issue out of the Department of Education, it was going to be really important that we have this dual reporting relationship. That was her position and she was not willing to budge on that. So we backed off; the chancellors backed off on it. I think we may have put in language like this doesn't have to be forever. We also put in language about what dual reporting meant here. I don't think Janet cares about having the systemwide person be involved in hiring. I think she wants to have it so the lines of communication are clearly established to the systemwide office, which I have no problems with in any event, whether there's dual reporting or not. But sometimes symbolism trumps reality, and this is a time when I can understand that.

So overall, I was very happy with the report. I thought it did a good thing for the university. It isn't one of the reports you'll read and say, "This report will live forever!" It's not one of those things. But I think it was useful. I think it helped bring to an end a situation that was initiated by this audit, that we could start to bring to closure, and actually bring to

closure in a way that produced some real benefit to the university. It isn't the end all, be all, but we did some good things. So I was pleased with it and I enjoyed the process and I enjoyed working with the other people. And if it hasn't come across before, I have a lot of respect for both Sam Hawgood and Carol Christ as chancellors. They're among the chancellors I most respect and admire. So it was a pleasure to work with them. And George Kieffer is a great guy to work with. So that was the Ten Campus Report.

Scientist and Chancellor: How do the Two Interact?

Reti: So George, I was sitting here thinking and wondering what the interactions are between your broad perspectives as an astrophysicist, or a physicist, and the world of administration that you've been immersed in for the last thirteen years and more, if you consider your systemwide experience. To what extent does astrophysics help you keep perspective on some of these political problems? What interactions, if any, are there between those two parts of you?

Blumenthal: It's a great question. First of all, one of the things I've often joked about is that for most of my career, I was trying to understand the mysteries of the universe. And in last twenty years, I've been trying to understand the mysteries of the univers-ity.

Reti: (laughs) That's good.

Blumenthal: But more seriously, I think my astrophysical background has been a huge help to me in several respects. First, as an astrophysicist, one of the things I learned and tried very hard to practice throughout my career was to think big, to look at problems at the highest level that I can. Sometimes you have to get immersed in the details, but don't get so immersed in the details that you can't pop up every now and then and look at things from 40,000 or 50,000 feet to understand exactly what you're doing. Think the big questions, and no matter whatever you're doing, no matter how detailed, even grungy it

may be, think about how that fits into the big picture of stuff. That has been an important part of whatever success I might have had as a scientist and frankly, I think that translates directly into the university: it's important to never lose sight of the big picture, where you're going with things, even as you deal with individual issues. So that's one point.

The second point is related, and similar in a way but different in another way. In science, you're governed by the laws of science, by the basic fundamental principles. You need to keep them in mind. You always need to keep these basic fundamental things in your mind. I remember when I was teaching graduate classes, for example, or undergraduate classes, I often said in my classes—and students thought this was hilarious—that I never expected them to remember an equation that I didn't remember. They thought that was hilarious, because I knew all this stuff, and I was so educated, blah, blah, blah. And it's also true that as the years went on, I learned more and more equations, just because you tend to. But when I started teaching, I knew almost no equations. I could recite almost none—I mean, not zero, but relatively—I knew very few things that I could write as an equation. What I could do was I could derive what I needed from first principles. And I was willing to go back to first principles. I used to sometimes tell my classes—and I actually was serious, although they always thought I was funny, that this was a joke—but I was really serious. I said, “Part of my goal in this class is that if you were stranded on a desert island with lots of paper and pencils and nothing else, you could reproduce everything in the class.” And that's my goal, for people to be able to think from first principles, just to understand a few basic things and to be able to build from there.

As an administrator, and as a chancellor, that doesn't directly translate. But I think one of the translations is that I've often tried to ask myself the question: what is the principled thing to do here? What is the thing that really is consonant with my values? Because sometimes it isn't obvious what that is, and it does require some thought to do that.

An example comes to mind—and I won't give the details now. I may later in these pages—but there was a grievance that had gone to the Privilege and Tenure Committee. And I got a Privilege and Tenure report. I didn't like the report. (laughs) And the reason I didn't like the report was because I was convinced that the conclusion of that report would be adverse to the campus, that it would do some bad things to the campus, if I did what that committee recommended. It was clear to me that not so much the campus, but at least for the division in which that case resided, it would have some really adverse consequences. On the other hand—and it took me a while to come to this realization—I did come to realize that the report from that committee was based on a principle, and that principle was pretty fundamental. So I had the dilemma of looking at a principle versus something that would actually have adverse consequences for part of the university. And at the end of the day, I made the decision to stick with the principle, on the grounds that the adverse consequences would last a year, two years, whatever, but not forever, but that establishing and maintaining the principle was really in the best long-term best interest of the university.

So, as a scientist, I relied on certain principles or basic ideas. And I tried to translate that into my role as chancellor as well. To never lose sight of, or to try to always connect to, these basic principles that I think govern what I think we should be doing.

Reti: Mm hmm. I've heard you talk about transparency as one of those principles.

Blumenthal: Yeah. Transparency is an important principle, for example. Freedom of speech. Academic freedom. Those kinds of things are principles that, even though it might be simpler to avoid them in some circumstances, it's just not a good idea.

First Generation Students

Reti: Okay. Thank you. That's great. Okay, should we talk about first generation students now?

Blumenthal: First generation students. I don't have a lot to say about first generation students, but I did want to emphasize that I did have that experience. I think I've talked about it.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: And I see in our students today many of the same experiences that I felt as a student myself. Students can experience a sense of being lost in a world where everybody else seems to understand what the hell they're doing. Everybody else knows their way around. Everyone else seems to be getting advice, or somehow is born with the knowledge of how to survive in the system, and I don't have a clue. I think a lot of our students feel that way as well and it's really important that we do everything we can to overcome that, to help them to overcome that, and to acknowledge that feeling. I mean, part of overcoming anything is to acknowledge it. If we can acknowledge it, and put in place programs that will help them to overcome it, then I think we'll be okay.

I am very proud of the fact that UCSC consistently enrolls over 40 percent first generation students. And by that I mean students who, when they graduate, will be the first generation in their family to graduate from a four-year college. I mean, think about it. That's amazing! I don't know what the number was when I went to school, even though I was a first-generation student. I would guess at, for example, UC San Diego when I was a graduate student, among the undergraduates there, I would guess that no more than 10 percent were first generation. I don't know if that's true or not, but that would be a guess.

And if that guess is anywhere near correct, then we've come a long way in going from 10 percent to 40 percent. And the 40 percent applies at almost all of the campuses.

Reti: So it's not that Santa Cruz has more.

Blumenthal: We may have slightly more, but not grossly more. We probably have more than Berkeley, but not more than San Diego. I don't know that for a fact. But we're all in the roughly 40 percent range.

So I think that's great success. Obviously it should be a self-defeating success because the more successful you are, then the less likely that the next generation will not have parents who have graduated from college. But again, we need to have services in place for those students, and we need to be cognizant of how hard it is. The issues that they face are just not so easy always to figure out beforehand. I mean, as a first-generation student, I fixated on some weird things that I worried about and they weren't the right things to worry about. I'm sure our students do the same thing. So I think this is one of the most important things. I think educating first-generation students is one of the most important things we do as an institution. I think in some ways it's more important than any other student group because it's an indication of really providing opportunity. And first-generation students can be any race, any religion, any background—we've got them all. It is a characteristic that really cuts across every line that you can imagine.

Reti: Yes. Thank you. I somewhat fall into that group, too, with some complexities having to do with my parents' immigrant/refugee background. But it wasn't named when we were students. I didn't really think of myself that way.

Blumenthal: No. I didn't, either.

Reti: But there were things I didn't know because my parents couldn't explain to me about how to be at a research university with a liberal arts education.

Blumenthal: And it's not just when you begin. It's also as you continue on. Again, my experience was that when I started college, I was starting college. My parents had an expectation that I would finish college and I was going to finish college. But in talking to other students and discovering that they were going on to graduate school, I thought going to graduate school would be kind of a good idea, because I was pretty smart and I could do that stuff. And I had no idea how to go to graduate school. Then when I expressed that interest to my parents, they were appalled because they worried that I going to be a professional student who only goes to school. The example my mother used was somebody she knew went to the University of Wisconsin and got a graduate degree in entomology. He got an advanced degree and studied bugs and he ended up driving a taxi or something, because he couldn't get a job studying bugs. So from her perspective, and from my father's perspective, it was all about what kind of a job or career lay ahead? And from my perspective, it was much more about inquisitiveness, and the psychic reward of pursuing your advanced studies.

More on Undocumented Students

All right. Let's talk about undocumented students. So the first time I really met and talked to a group of undocumented students was soon after I became the acting chancellor. Kelly and I held an event at University House for undocumented students because we knew we had a bunch of them here, and we had a lot of sympathy for their plight. What I still remember was that four of those students spoke and gave a talk at this gathering. We'd brought together some donors with the idea that the donors would provide some help for undocumented students. And those four students agreed to speak. And it turned out, not

only did they speak to us, but they had actually collaborated and written an article on the undocumented student experience. Can you imagine how much courage it took for them to do that? I can't believe that anyone would do that today in Trump World. But even in those days, it was still an extremely risky thing for them to do. I thought their stories were so moving—of what they had to overcome, and the impediments that were put in their way toward getting a degree. And then to have the courage to come out and identify themselves thereby putting themselves at risk. Oh my God, that was really quite something.

So at that event, it was explained to us that we couldn't ask people to give a check to the university to support undocumented students because the university wasn't allowed to do that at that time. So what we ended up doing was establishing a fund to buy textbooks for undocumented students outside of the university structure. We collected some money that night and actually Kelly and I gave some money that night. But we didn't give it to the university. I don't exactly remember how we did it, but we created some entity that was outside the university, and that entity then bought books for undocumented students. So that was my first experience on the campus.

But I was really shaken by the fact that in California, it was illegal for University funds to go to undocumented students. Not only did Cal Grants not go to undocumented students, but that was also true of federal stuff, Pell Grants and work study. It was also true of return to aid, which could not go to undocumented students. It was also true of gift funds that came to the university because once a gift is given to the university, it's the university's money, not gift money. I just thought that was really, really bad and of course I wanted everything changed.

I got together with Bob Birgeneau, who was the chancellor at Berkeley. He held similar views to mine. We talked to several regents and we made a proposal that the regents, on their own, adopt two policies: one policy that would allow return to aid to be granted to undocumented students, and the other policy to allow the university to collect funds in support of undocumented students and then to distribute those funds as scholarships or whatever. Those were the two things we argued that the regents had within their authority to do, based upon the constitutional autonomy of the regents.

So we went around and we talked to a bunch of regents. We got no traction on the return to aid piece of it. They were way too scared politically to do that. There was some interest in doing the thing about gifts, and allowing gifts to come. I think that was seen by some regents as being less problematic or less difficult. But we didn't get very far. And even though some regents were willing to support the gift thing, we could not get to a majority of the regents to go along.

So it was a very frustrating effort on our part to kind of loosen things up. The legislature had loosened things some years earlier with AB 540. AB 540 allows students in California who graduated from a California high school and spent at least three years at that high school to not pay out-of-state or nonresident tuition when they went to the university. So that was at least something that had already been done by the state.

But what we really needed was the California Dream Act. And finally, the California Dream Act passed. What the California Dream Act did is it allowed the university to take funds for undocumented students; it allowed us to use return to aid for undocumented students, and I think ultimately—it may have been a subsequent bill, I can't remember—allowed Cal Grants to go to undocumented students.

Reti: Mm hmm. As long as they had AB 540 status.⁴¹⁷

Blumenthal: I think that's right. Thank you. They had to be AB 540. So that was a major change. That was a very positive change for many students. But not all students are AB 540. In addition, allowing students to get Cal Grants and gift funds and return to aid is not enough to put together a full financial package for students in the worst financial shape. Because that still lacks Pell Grants and student loans, which come from the federal government.

So even after the California Dream Act, we weren't in a position to offer California students the same financial aid support that we could offer to California residents, no matter how needy they were. So certainly we wanted the Federal Dream Act to pass. The federal Dream Act would, of course, allow Pell Grants to go to undocumented students, would allow student loans to go to undocumented students and basically level the playing field. We're still waiting for that and we may have to wait a long time for that.

So then along came DACA during Obama's administration. DACA made a major difference because prior to DACA, these students, particularly the ones who ultimately became DACA students, could have been deported on a dime. They had no legal status in the country, no matter what they were doing at school or how good they were. They could be rounded up and deported on a whim. And anyone could report them. I mean, this was dangerous.

So DACA provided a lot of advantage there. It provided employment opportunities for students. And it provided employment opportunities after they were students. But not all students qualified for DACA.

But once DACA came in, that was kind of the height of when government had reacted in a way that was supportive of these students. We did get some money from UCOP to support DACA students soon after DACA came into play. That money came from Janet.

We had lots of ideas about how we would use that money. Ultimately what we did was, I think, really good. We decided to let the DACA students decide. They convened themselves as a group. They discussed it until they were done discussing it, and they made a recommendation, and we did what they recommended.

Reti: What did they recommend?

Blumenthal: I don't remember in detail anymore, but I think it was a broad distribution of the funding to support the maximum number of people.

Reti: I know that we have an advisor who works with DACA students. We have a lot of programming. My understanding is that we have more DACA students here—at least this was true a few years ago—on this campus than many of the UCs, and that we've been known as a friendly campus.

Blumenthal: I think that was certainly true a few years ago. Our numbers are about 400 DACA students, so I think we did exceed the number on other campuses. But certainly compared to the CSUs it isn't an extraordinary number. I don't know what the numbers are on other UC campuses, to be honest with you.

It's been interesting. I may have talked about this before, to watch the feelings of students about Janet Napolitano.

Reti: Yes. We did talk about that.

Blumenthal: We did talk about that.

Reti: Because she, of course, was director of Homeland Security.

Blumenthal: Right. And she deported people.

Reti: The students were completely freaked out when she became the president of UC.

Blumenthal: Right. But she also is the one who came up with DACA.

Reti: I know.

Blumenthal: So there's no, I guess there's no quarter given to the wicked.

And around this time, Kelly got involved as well. She organized a couple of fairs on campus to provide legal support for DACA students. What she did was she rounded up several immigration lawyers in Santa Cruz who agreed to donate their time to the campus and she brought them up to campus. Then she got a bunch of law students who could work with them and we basically had a fair for DACA students to get legal advice. It actually worked pretty well. People felt quite satisfied afterwards. So I think she did that a couple of times, had a couple of those. And then she wanted to do a big fundraiser, to raise a whole bunch more money. That just became a fiasco. I think we all learned a little bit about identity politics. She was going to organize this big fundraiser on May fifth, which is Cinco de Mayo. And lots of people objected to that, and felt it was demeaning to hold it on May fifth. Some Hispanic leaders from New York who were actually going to come out to that event had no problem with the date, but some of our students did. So our hopes of actually raising many tens of thousands of dollars, which I think was realistic, vanished. We ended up not doing the event at all.

Subsequent to that, Janet put in place a program for legal services for DACA students by using resources at the Davis Law School. They hired some lawyers who were recent Davis graduates. One of them was assigned to Santa Cruz to provide services for our DACA students. I think that program has worked generally pretty well. Is it perfect? No. It would be nicer to have something on campus. But on the other hand, it's a whole lot better than nothing and I think it's really important that our students have access to that kind of legal

representation. And they even extended it to the families of DACA students as well. So I think that was a good program. Janet deserves credit for that.

However, as you know, when Donald Trump was elected, one of his major initiatives after he was elected was to eliminate DACA. He tried to do that and he still continues to try to do that. I am proud of UC for taking him on in court and opposing that. UC has won most of the lawsuits that we've been involved with, with regard to DACA. But we're playing a rear guard action because DACA is, after all, an administrative mandate. What the administration creates, the administration can destroy. The only reason that Trump has been prevented from doing it is because he tried to do it outside of normal process. If he then proceeds and does it inside of normal process, there will be no recourse. So even though DACA's been reinstated, that's not adequate. And it's even worse than that, because new students can't be applying for it. Once the DACA students all graduate, then we're back in the old days of pre-DACA.

I want to emphasize, these students, even with the California Dream Act, have huge burdens on them. Many of them have to take two or even three jobs. They do not have access to Pell Grants. They do not have access to federal student loans. So their financial needs are just not being taken care of. And they live with the constant fear that they, or members of their families, may face sudden deportation.

Reti: Yeah. Do you want to take a break before we dive into diversity? You look tired, George.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I am a little tired. [break taken]

Diversity

Okay. We're going to talk now about diversity. I'm going to have a lot to say about it. And I might not be organized optimally so I apologize for that in advance. So, one of the first issues that I dealt with when I came to campus was student-initiated outreach, in particular E Squared. It was quite interesting because while I was still faculty representative to the regents, I was aware, based upon discussions that Bob Dynes had with regents, that there was a very, very low regard among the regents and among the president and his staff for student-initiated outreach. They were quite negative about it. They were demeaning about it. I'm not sure what the right word was, but the discussions were such that it was clear that they did not take that seriously.

Reti: And this meaning outreach for recruiting students to come to UCSC.

Blumenthal: Coming to any UC campus. This was systemwide—it was about admissions. It was about admitting students, and about how ineffective student-initiated outreach is. That's what I heard. And I heard that in a regental discussion; I heard it in a president's discussion. And the then-speaker of the assembly, Fabian Nuñez,⁴¹⁸ even participated in that discussion. So when I came back to campus, and in particular, when I suddenly stepped in as chancellor, I didn't know beans about student-initiated outreach, but I knew that it was not well regarded.

Soon after I became chancellor, I had a meeting with E2—Engaging Education—which is both student-initiated outreach, plus student-to-student counseling and tutoring, and retention efforts within the campus. There're a whole wide range of subgroups within E Squared that do these things. So I met with them. They were asking for funding to support their activities. They had some funding from student fees, but they wanted funding from the chancellor's office. And I was kind of surprised, because they actually were getting

results. You could just look at the students that they brought to campus. So I was very much inclined to support them, and I did support them, and in fact have supported them quite strongly over the past thirteen years. But I was surprised by it, because I had not expected much when I heard I was going to be meeting with a group that engaged in student-initiated outreach.

But I wanted data and I wanted outcome data. I would meet with them regularly. I wanted to see data, and I wanted to see a report. So I said, "Your funding next year is contingent on your giving me a report with outcome data." At least my thinking was A, I wanted the data. B, I think that it's one thing to give funding to do good stuff, and they could do good stuff, but they needed to be accountable, too. I thought they would learn something by having to be accountable. So I viewed it as kind of an educational thing as well.

So the next year I got a report. It wasn't a very good or well done report, but I got at least a report. I complained about a few things in the report. The next year I got a better report. Pretty soon, I was getting some pretty good reports that really did contain the information that should be in there. So I felt like well, this was an educational thing and I am, by forcing this, I'm doing more than just giving them money.

And I've been impressed with them. I've been impressed with the extent to which alums who had gone through E Squared, both as students who were recruited or supported, or students who were mentors themselves, how committed they remain to E Squared even after they've graduated. They come back for events. I attended several of their recruiting events where they bring like 100 or 150 students to campus in a weekend to show them the campus and talk through the issues they'll face in Santa Cruz. By the way, at those events, they're very upfront about some of the racial issues that they may face, etcetera.

Reti: Is Destination Higher Education part of that?

Blumenthal: Yep, it's one of them. Yep. I thought it was a great group. They put on a fascinating show. They've invited me to speak at their event a few times, which I've been happy to do. In fact, I was so happy that I encouraged them to invite the student regent to come. A couple of the student regents came a few times. Then I decided I wanted Regent Eddie Island to come. Eddie Island was a regent appointed by Arnold Schwarzenegger. Eddie was a lawyer for some utility companies. He'd just retired and he was, I think, a personal friend of Arnold's. He was very concerned about racial justice, racial issues in general, and I thought he would enjoy it. I developed a pretty good relationship with Eddie so I invited him to campus to come to the event. And he refused. He said he didn't want to favor one campus over another, so he tried to avoid doing events on campuses. I kept inviting him, nevertheless. Two years later he accepted and he came to this recruiting event. And he was just amazed. I had dinner with him and some students also had dinner with us. Then we had the event. And then I took him out to coffee or something afterwards. And you know, sometimes when you see somebody and they're on a high, that's what he was like. He was so elated. He was so stoked. He thought this was one of the best things he had ever seen in his life. He was just really stoked about it. I am so glad that I was able to do that for him because Eddie was a decent guy with really good goals for the university.

So I think they've done a fantastic job, not just in recruiting, but in retention efforts. They have faced some challenges. First, the challenges were because they housed students in dormitories with existing students. And at some colleges, I can't remember which college it is now, they have actually faced racial incidents on the weekend that we're recruiting students. That's almost unfathomable. You know, things that are clearly in the hate bias category. Unfathomable. But interesting, because the E squared folks tended to turn them into learning experiences. I think that's very good. But they came to me and said, "What

can you do about this?” Frankly, there’s nothing I can do. I can’t force existing students to behave themselves. I can publicize what’s going on. But I can’t really control what happens.

Reti: You mean the code of conduct is not enough to—

Blumenthal: Yeah, but even if somebody—first of all, free speech doesn’t violate the code of conduct. You can be racially prejudiced, and that can be free speech. You can be demeaning to people, and that could be free speech. There are lines that you can’t cross, but there’s a significant area between the line of demeaning and the line of violating the rules. So that’s one set of challenges they faced periodically bringing students to campus. It’s kind of amazing to me in this day and age, but it does happen.

The other thing was as the lounges disappeared, they had a lot more trouble getting a host for the students that they brought. And so, my office intervened and managed to get them space so that they could continue their program.

Now over the last couple of years, I’ve had some disputes with them over their desire for quote “permanent funding.” Unquote. Because first of all, they’ve been running budget surpluses, so they haven’t actually spent all the money we give them. I don’t mind people having surpluses if there’s a good reason. But they’ve been pushing real hard for permanent funding, on the grounds that if it isn’t permanent, it could be gone next year. I’ve tried to explain to them that there is no such thing as permanent funding. There are permanent funds that inflate every year, etcetera. But any money that I give to campus, even if it’s permanent money, I can take away the next year. There’s nothing permanent. There is a symbolism to them. So I’ve argued a lot that this is really kind of a silly argument to have. They don’t buy that. So this year I made the decision to give them some permanent funding. I’m leaving, I think it will make them feel better knowing that they

have a stream coming to them. But if the next chancellor, for example, chose to do so, she could cut off their funding. It isn't permanent.

Reti: Yes. There's a lot of educating that you have to do for students to understand how the university works.

Blumenthal: Exactly.

Reti: Of course, none of us can expect that they would know that. We've all had to learn some of those things as we've been here.

Blumenthal: Okay. So I think that's pretty much E2. But I just want to say that today, I would say that there's really two campuses that are doing an outstanding job in student-initiated outreach: Santa Cruz and UCLA, and the kind of stuff that I'd been hearing from Dynes and from Nunez and from others at regents meetings was simply untrue, at least, as applied to UCSC. I toyed for years with the idea of asking for an opportunity for our students to give a presentation to the regents on what they do and at the end of the day, it never happened. I did suggest it. I didn't get any traction when I suggested it. Probably what I should have done is suggested it last year when Michael Brown was provost. I might have gotten more traction. I had other things on my mind, shall I say? But I still think that would be a good idea, and I think the students should be proud of what they've established here. I think that to me this is one of the best of all worlds: students giving back; students helping other students; students helping the university; and students doing something that's fundamentally principled: trying to increase the diversity of the campus.

Reti: Absolutely.

Blumenthal: So soon after I was appointed acting chancellor, we approached the ten-year anniversary of Proposition 209. And the then-student regent, Maria Ledesma was a

graduate student at UCLA in education, which as a program has produced a lot of student regents. I've always talked to the student regents about what is their initiative, or what do they want to do? Maria wanted there to be something done to look at the effects of Proposition 209 a decade later. And she was also very interested in climate studies around diversity at the university. So she proposed to the regents, and they accepted the idea, that the regents would form a regents study group on diversity—essentially a subcommittee of the regents—to look at the effects of Proposition 209 a decade later, and how we should move forward. So they set up a major committee that included a bunch of regents, a couple of chancellors, a couple of faculty and a few others, and we took off. And I was appointed to that group.

The group divided up into four subcommittees. One subcommittee looked at faculty diversity. That was chaired by Gibor Basri,⁴¹⁹ who was the chair of the systemwide senate diversity committee, but later became the first vice chancellor at Berkeley of diversity, equity, and inclusion. There was a graduate professional students subcommittee, which I chaired. And there was an undergraduate committee, which I think Michael Brown co-chaired. And there was a climate subcommittee, which Maria chaired.

So we went off and we had a bunch of meetings and we did a lot of work. Particularly on my committee, we did a lot of study of graduate students and professional students. We came to some very interesting conclusions in the graduate and professional group. What we found was when you look at the percentage of academic underrepresented minority graduate students, and you just make a plot of that percentage for the system over time, at the time of the passage of Prop 209, you see no features in that curve. It doesn't look as though 209 had an immediate impact on the diversity of our academic graduate student population. But what you did see was that our percentage of URMs was growing very slowly but steadily. And it continued to grow very slowly but steadily. And so, at least in

terms of just looking at the output, there was no immediate evidence of an effect of 209. I think we found, in addition, that the numbers, that diversity at UC in graduate programs was higher than most other universities, and that most of the universities during that same period were increasing their diversity at a faster pace than we were. They were catching up to us, but they hadn't caught up to us yet. So their slope was higher, but the numbers were higher and steady for us. So it may be that we didn't take advantage of a trend that may have been there nationally by having Prop 209. But that's pure speculation. I don't know that, don't know that for a fact.

With regard to professional students, the story was completely different. What we found was that at UC professional schools, when Prop 209 passed, the percentage of URMs dropped dramatically. I think there was one year where there were two African American students in business schools in the UC system. It dropped truly dramatically.

And what happened subsequently was also interesting. So in medicine, in the medical schools—and of course it varied a little bit from campus to campus, but not a lot—in the medical schools, they experienced this huge drop in diversity, and then it began to increase again at a much faster rate and reached and actually exceeded the original diversity prior to Prop 209. I think a lot of that is because of all the efforts that the medical schools put into increasing the diversity of their class, including the prime program, which I think played a major role in it. You know, UC Prime? That's a program, started by Michael Drake, that provides support for medical students who are committed to practicing in underserved communities. Anyway, medical schools basically have recovered, or even maybe a little bit more so. Some campuses, like UCSF, were doing really well at that point. And of course, in the years since that study, the medical schools are doing much better yet.

Reti: So, my understanding is after 209, you couldn't explicitly recruit students based on race.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: But you could still recruit based on economic status or things like that.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: So the medical schools and other schools continued to serve diverse communities that way.

Blumenthal: Yes. Right. And again, the Prime program is a great example. You don't have to be an underrepresented minority to be in Prime. But it had a tendency to attract students who—

Reti: Want to serve their communities that they've grown up in, or similar communities.

Blumenthal: So, that was the medical schools.

The law schools also experienced this huge decline, right after Proposition 209. And they were slowly inching their way back to pre-209 levels, but they had not gotten there yet. They were maybe half to two-thirds of the way to getting back to pre-Prop 209 diversity.

Reti: And also, the other question I would have would be the demographics of the state have continued to change and become more diverse, especially in terms of Latino communities. So was there some way to kind of sort that out? Or is it impossible?

Blumenthal: No, we didn't try to sort that out, because we were talking about professional schools. I want to come back to that point in just a minute. But no, there wasn't a major effect. But we didn't study it in huge detail. But I'll tell you what we did do.

But I want to finish the last one, which was the business schools, schools of management. They also experienced this sharp decline right at 209, almost to zero diversity. And they basically had not recovered ten years later. So the conclusion was clear: The medical schools really put a lot of effort into it, and they recovered, and they're doing pretty well. The law schools were putting effort into it. It was taking them longer to recover. They were not doing really well, but they were not doing as horribly as they had a few years earlier. And the business schools, basically, had made no progress since the passage of 209. I thought that was a pretty strong conclusion.

We did try to dig into the issue that you raise of demographics in California, but we did it in a slightly different way. What we found was that one of the strongest sources of underrepresented minorities in our academic graduate programs were students who graduated from California colleges: UC or CSU or privates—in other words, taking advantage, to some extent, of California's demography. So we found that admitting a higher proportion of students from California colleges and universities was a good approach to increasing the diversity of graduate programs, which are truly national or international in scope. So that was one of our recommendations, that we really move to increasing California graduates among our graduate population.

In my committee, it was a lot of work we did. We did a lot of data analysis. And I didn't have much support. In fact, at the time I used Patti Hiramoto,⁴²⁰ who was then working in our ODI office, who soon thereafter left to go to CSUMB. But Patti really wanted to work on this. She was very interested in it, and she did do a lot of work. I really want to thank her for that and acknowledge that. Of course, we also had UCOP crunch a bunch of numbers for us. But I remember spending a lot of time on it.

I also had a political problem, because there were a bunch of regents on this committee with divergent views. And one of the regents was Peter Preuss, who was from San Diego.⁴²¹ Peter had been on the regents for a fair amount of time. He was a mathematician who made his money in some high tech business. Peter, I would say, was pretty conservative politically, and he really didn't want to go where the rest of the committee was going. I'd come to know Peter fairly well. When I was on the board, I'd come to know him. We'd served on some committees together. I like Peter. But I put a lot of time into keeping Peter on the committee. He kept wanting to quit and I kept trying to maneuver to persuade him to stay on, because I thought we would lose credibility if somebody on the committee decided to resign. So that succeeded, and he stayed on. I think he was ultimately happy with our final report.

The report was written. It was presented to the regents, etcetera. But one of the things we did in this report for the whole study group was we included and wrote a diversity goals statement for the University of California. I don't think that had been done before. I think that may still be the dominating goal statement.

Reti: That's amazing. We're talking about like 2007?

Blumenthal: Two thousand seven, yeah.

Reti: And that hadn't been done?

Blumenthal: Or if there had been something, it wasn't anywhere near as comprehensive as what we did. We certainly advanced it. We gave a much more nuanced and careful consideration of what that statement should be. So we wrote it. And I think that report is still, that statement is still quoted as the diversity statement at UC. So I think it was a great success in many ways.

So meanwhile, back at the ranch, back on campus— Did I talk about organizing diversity efforts on campus? I don't think so.

Reti: I don't think so.

Blumenthal: So soon after I started as chancellor, the question of organizing diversity efforts at UCSC came up, and I discussed this extensively; in fact, this became almost a daily conversation with Ashish for a while. So how should we organize diversity efforts on our campus? Because such efforts were disorganized. Let me remind you—Denice had said she wanted to achieve excellence through diversity, and I had not liked the preposition “through.” So I had converted it to “excellence *and* diversity.” But I was serious about wanting diversity. But I didn't know as a structure how to do that, or what the most effective way to do that was.

The first idea that we had, and Ashish and I pursued it for some months, was why don't we set up a standing committee that could include faculty and staff and students that oversaw diversity efforts on the campus. Such a group could report to the chancellor on a regular basis and could bring in new ideas of how we advance diversity, and those ideas would be implemented at the chancellor's office. So that was the idea. We needed a really strong chair for that committee: somebody who's committed, willing to do the work. We also felt that it had to be a faculty member. I was perfectly happy to give money or course relief or whatever. The issue of compensation for that faculty member was just not an issue for me because I knew it would be time-consuming.

So we drew up a list and we offered the position to two or three people. I worked hard to try to persuade one of them to do it. Of course, we picked good people who had many other callings on their time.

Reti: That's often the issue.

Blumenthal: We came close with a couple. I think they weren't completely comfortable with the concept of a committee being the thing that does it. We were kind of thrashing around, trying to figure out how to do this. And at the end of the day, we did not succeed in getting anyone to agree to do it who we would have found acceptable.

But I did note that at the time, Berkeley was the first campus in UC to establish a vice chancellor of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I forget the exact title. But basically, diversity efforts on the campus. And that person was Gibor Basri, who I knew quite well. I knew Gibor because he's an astronomer, and I knew Gibor because he chaired the UCAAD, the system-wide Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity. I thought he was a good choice. I thought he was an excellent choice. But that had just started.

So I was skeptical of the concept of a vice chancellor of diversity and inclusion. I was skeptical of putting all diversity efforts in one place. I knew that at Berkeley they'd taken all the diversity programs and they stuck them into the vice chancellor's purview, and made the vice chancellor a member of the chancellor's cabinet to raise its level. The raising of the level was good. But I was uncomfortable with all of the diversity programs being in one unit on the campus because I was concerned that this was ghettoizing diversity. I felt that if we were really going to make progress on diversity on campus, this had to be a goal that permeated the campus, so that everyone had a responsibility for progress. I feared that if we established a vice chancellor of equity and inclusion, or diversity, or whatever we called it, that it would make it too easy for people on campus to say, "Well, they're handling it over there. Why should I worry about it?" I felt that diversity was something that needed to permeate the entirety of the campus. So my thinking at the time was let's wait and see how this works at Berkeley.

Now, thirteen years later, we find that a number of campuses have established a vice chancellor of equity and inclusion, or diversity and inclusion. So it's now much more common. UCLA has one. In fact, UCLA has a really good one. Some of the other campuses have done that as well, though not all campuses. So it's been something that has been copied. I'm uncomfortable that the two most well-known ones are at Berkeley and UCLA because I don't think their progress in diversity is quite what we would be looking for. But I don't think that they have a sense of ghettoization either. So maybe it's worked better than I feared. At UCLA, in fact, it has served as a central place where information does get out to the campus, largely because Gene Block, the chancellor, is so committed to those goals.

Another concern I had was my innate reluctance to create a new senior management position, with its attendant support staff, on a campus as small as UCSC.

So I think what I'm saying is that this is a model that can work. I'm now convinced that this is a model that can be successful. But that's not the way we went at the time. What we decided to do was to appoint a diversity officer or two—the original idea was let's have a diversity officer, but then in thinking about it, this was going to be awkward and difficult because we could bring in a professional to be a diversity officer, somebody who knew about diversity programs, and that person could handle diversity efforts with regard to students or staff, but that person really couldn't do faculty. It had to be a faculty member who oversees diversity in the faculty. I mean, theoretically we could bring in one diversity officer who's a faculty member. But again, it couldn't just be any old faculty member. It would have to be a UC-quality faculty member.

So I decided that we would have two diversity officers. We'd have a diversity officer for faculty, and we'd have a diversity officer for students and staff. We went down that road

and that's still where we are. The diversity officer for faculty was originally Alison Galloway, when she was the vice provost of academic affairs. And then when she moved over to become provost, Herbie Lee became the diversity officer for faculty. And then for the staff, we had a few people in that role, some of them very good. Our current one is, of course, Linda Scholtz,⁴²² who's very, very good at this. She really is a professional. Linda, interestingly enough, was a faculty member elsewhere, but that doesn't mean that you would necessarily be accepted by the faculty as the—

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: And we have lost at least one really good diversity officer for staff and students because I was unwilling to expand it to over everything, not just staff and students because I was too concerned about the faculty piece of it. So she went off to another institution that was more amenable to doing that.

I think the campus may want to reconsider at some point whether we should go down this road of a vice chancellor level position. This late in my tenure, in the last year, I was unwilling to make the change at kind of the last minute. I wouldn't object if the next chancellor chose to do it. I wouldn't object if the next chancellor chose not to do it. I don't think that there's a right model for everything. But my prejudice about the ghettoization, I think, is probably not fair. Or at least, they've figured out how to get around it. So I think it can work on this campus. So it's something we could reconsider.

And because of the importance of this for the campus, I've pretty much kept diversity efforts in the chancellor's office, or reporting to me through Ashish, for example, because I wanted to highlight that this was an important campus goal and I didn't want to make it subservient to other goals. So that's why we've organized the way we did.

Reti: Would you say diversity is one of these principles that we were talking about earlier?

Blumenthal: Absolutely. No question about it.

So anyway, that's why we're organized as we are. That's the background for it. Again, I don't know if we did the right thing or the wrong thing, but we did the best we could and I'm telling you the reasons why we did what we did.

There're a whole bunch of diversity programs that we started, and I won't even try to go through them all. I think that's useless. People can look that up. The one I want to particularly highlight is the Diversity and Inclusion Certificate Program. That program was actually the brainchild of Ashish and I really believe Ashish deserves to get the credit for that. Basically the program is free, and initially, for the first few years, offered only to staff on campus. It's a two-year program of courses, with electives, but they have to take a certain number of required classes in order to get a certificate on diversity and inclusion.

Reti: Wow, what an opportunity.

Blumenthal: We have had now more than eight hundred students enroll in this program. So far, we have more than four hundred graduates who hold certificates from the program. I'm really proud of it. And we have extended it to graduate students and faculty, so we've had several faculty and several graduate students take it as well.

Reti: That's remarkable.

Blumenthal: I think this was the first such program of its kind of the country. It's truly innovative. I know at one point we had a meeting with Mark Yudof and Chris Edley. Ashish and I were talking about the program. Chris Edley wanted to put it online and have it be an online program. We thought about it and decided that that just simply wasn't feasible. We couldn't offer the program online, not with the effectiveness that it has. On the other hand, it has been emulated now elsewhere by a number of institutions. I think

we really have been the campus that innovated on this. I don't know if we'll ever get credit, but I want to state for the record that we were first, and that Ashish gets the credit for having conceived this program.

Reti: Well, that's great to get that on the record.

Blumenthal: It has been so successful, in fact, that we're now offering an advanced certificate. So you can come back for graduate studies in the certificate program. And we decided last year to start a copycat program in sustainability. So we now offer a certificate program in sustainability as well. I think, as a model, this is a great way to deal with fundamental issues of the campus.

Reti: And to offer some staff development, which is really important.

Blumenthal: Of course. And in the case of diversity, the point is that we have a staff, many of whom have been here for many years, and we have an increasingly diverse student population. And they represent new challenges and new issues that come up. It's important for our staff to feel comfortable and successful in dealing with the changing student population. That was really the motivation. I think for the program in sustainability, we're coming into a world where sustainability issues are becoming more and more paramount. It is a campus value. We're facing issues all the time that staff can play a role in, for example, the issue of recycling, which is now a fiasco on campus—we can't recycle anything because our recycling isn't pure enough. So there's going to be a lot of education that's needed for students. I think staff can play a big role in that.

Reti: Right. So just to be clear for the reader of this oral history, so we've had a recycling program for a long time.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: But people have been throwing things in the wrong bins, essentially. Because they don't understand where to put them.

Blumenthal: It isn't so much throwing things in the wrong bins, as it is not being pure in terms of what you throw. If you throw a dirty paper plate in a trash can, it can't be recycled because of the food that's on there. Recycling efforts now—certainly the ones we ship to China, but now even local recycling—requires a level of purity that we don't get on campus. So we need to train students—it's primarily students that are an issue—about what needs to be recycled and what can't be recycled. If you have a paper plate full of old food, you're much better off throwing it into the landfill and having it go to landfill, even though there's paper there that could be recycled, rather than throwing it into the recycling bin.

Reti: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So we started some other interesting programs. I don't want to go on and on, but one I think was interesting that we started a few years ago was the Students of Color Sustainability Group. We were noticing that our student volunteers in sustainability tended to be very, very white, yet there was interest in sustainability among underrepresented populations. In many cases some practices were culturally handed down to students which were fundamentally sustainable, but which were not an accepted part of our western culture.

Reti: What would be an example?

Blumenthal: Things that you might do in an African village, for example. If you're in a poor village, to actually use everything up, would be an example of that. So the idea was to start this thing and try to encourage more students from underrepresented communities to participate in sustainability. I think it's been quite successful.

At the faculty level, faculty recruitment is a really key thing, faculty recruitment and retention. Some people argue that our faculty should reflect the state, or should reflect our student body. I would certainly agree that, in the long run, this is an appropriate goal. But faculty get tenure and they stay a long time. And so the faculty of a campus like ours, or any campus, at any given moment, reflects the hiring that might have been done twenty years ago, or ten years ago, or five years ago, or thirty years ago. It doesn't necessarily reflect the hiring that you're doing now. So one important metric is the faculty you are hiring now. That's a metric of change. But the change is slow and will only take effect once you've turned over the faculty.

Faculty recruitment, and diversity in faculty is really important. But expecting to have major change overnight is unrealistic. That shouldn't deter us from doing stuff to advance faculty diversity. In fact, I would go even further and say since we didn't do much faculty hiring during the great recession, and we're now trying to make up for it by building back our faculty, this is the moment, if we are to increase the diversity of our faculty, where we have to actually do it. Because if we let this opportunity go by without increasing diversity, then it's going to be many more years before diversity increases substantially.

Reti: I see what you're saying.

Blumenthal: So it's really important that we do this now. And we've put in place a number of things, most of which are best practice kinds of things. We mandate that when we hire faculty, there must be a diversity member of the search committee, somebody who's charged with ensuring diversity. We require diversity training for all committee members. I just want to comment that diversity training is important, even if it's unconscious bias. Being aware of unconscious bias doesn't eliminate unconscious bias,

but it can mitigate it to some extent. All of us, to some extent, suffer from certain kinds of unconscious bias. So diversity training is important.

Another thing we've done very effectively on the campus is to use the presidential postdoc program. There is a systemwide program that funds postdoctoral fellows who advance diversity at the University of California in some form or another. The president put in place—I think it predated Janet, but she certainly supported it and maybe even expanded it—the president supports a program whereby if a campus does a search and hires a presidential postdoc into an open search, then the Office of the President will supply five years of a second faculty position to the campus. It's an inducement for the campuses to hire people out of presidential postdocs, which are presumably a much more diverse group of candidates. Our campus has done that on a number of occasions. So we've really taken advantage of that, probably more so than other campuses have, which is why, right now, at this moment in time, we actually have, in terms of underrepresented minorities, the highest ratio in the system, on the faculty. And we have the second highest ratio of women on the faculty in the system. We used to be the highest. I'm not sure why we dropped. I think we lost out to Merced. But right now, in terms of URM's, we have the highest faculty ratio of underrepresented minorities in the system. It doesn't mean we're a diverse faculty.

Reti: Right. But we're doing somewhat better than the other campuses in that area.

Blumenthal: The other thing that we've done, by the way, is we now require all faculty candidates to write a diversity statement.

Reti: Really? No matter whether they're in the sciences or anywhere.

Blumenthal: Doesn't matter what field. What have you done and what do you plan to do to increase diversity?

Reti: Has there been pushback on this requirement from some of the departments?

Blumenthal: We, meaning the chancellor and EVC, mandated this.

Reti: It's just how it is.

Blumenthal: It's kind of hard to push back, because you really want to get those positions. If somebody pushes back too hard, why would we give them a position?

Reti: Right. So it's kind of like back in the '90s we had the Target of Opportunity positions.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: I know Julia Armstrong Zwart talked about those. So there was a similar inducement to follow these principles.

Blumenthal: Yep. And then we've done a lot of spousal hires. Spousal hires tend to support increasing diversity. There have been quite a number of spousal hires in the last few years.

I think all of those programs together have acted to increase the diversity on campus. I think it also helps that we've created programs in areas that have diverse faculty. I would point out that for faculty diversity in particular, it is too easy for us to simply quote you a number and say we have so many percentage of you on faculty on campus. The issue isn't just the percentage on campus. It's also the distribution of those faculty across campus. There's some areas which are notoriously less diverse than others. I think, even if a campus might have overall diversity, if it's better distributed across campus, you could argue that they've done a better job. I want to acknowledge that.

Reti: Yes. And also, I was sitting here thinking that I'm aware that the number of Native Americans and African American students and faculty on this campus is very small. I believe we only have one or two faculty who are tenured who are African American. At least that was true—

Blumenthal: I think it's a little higher than that, but—

Reti: It may have gotten better in the last few years. I had heard that a few years ago. But I think in terms of clarifying for the reader that diversity across the board may not necessarily reflect every group that you might be seeking to attract.

Blumenthal: That's right. But there's very few Native Americans in general.

Reti: That's a hard one.

Blumenthal: That's a hard one.

Reti: But particularly in terms of African Americans, it's an area that the campus is really trying to work on.

Blumenthal: All of that is true.

I'm also very proud of the gender diversity that we had in senior management. There was, I remember there was one year during my chancellorship when every vice chancellor except one was a woman. And today women still dominate the vice chancellor ranks. I appointed Alison Galloway as the EVC. For years, she was the only woman EVC in the system, for years, I mean, four or five years. And until quite recently, Sarah Latham was the only vice chancellor of business and administrative services in the system. So in terms of at least gender diversity, we have a good record here.

Reti: And we forget how recent all of that is because there was a time when it was so unusual.

Blumenthal: Absolutely true. I'm proud of that. We sacrificed nothing to get that, because we have such good people in those roles.

But I also want to emphasize the role of retention because when you have diverse faculty, they become targets from other universities. Spousal hires certainly help in that regard. Marlene established the EVC fellows program. The EVC fellows program was designed to support faculty to finish books and do things like that with some help and training. We've also done some things through the Center for Instruction, Teaching, and Learning [CITL] that have been beneficial for minority faculty.

And going back to students—student diversity efforts continue. We do a lot of things to recruit. We're doing much more recruiting in high schools that are more likely to provide minority students. Some of our transfer programs have benefited because we've done much more outreach to community colleges that have higher ed programs. In community colleges, we have specific programs to encourage underrepresented students. For example, with San Jose City College, we have some grants as a Hispanic-Serving Institutions to encourage transfer among Hispanic students, but it's worded in a way that's for any student, for any kind of student, minority or otherwise. But that's a school that particularly has a high population of Hispanic students. So that's important.

Retention is important. That's an area where I think we have to continue to do more work. I think one of our weaknesses in terms of minority students is making sure that they get through the system as quickly as non-minority students, and that we do retain them to graduation.

Reti: There was certainly a time that—I don't know if this is still true, either—where people were saying that urban students of color would not be comfortable in a redwood forest. (laughs) I've heard that argument a lot.

Blumenthal: I've talked to a lot of students. And it's interesting. Because what you say is true. There are many urban students of color who are not comfortable with the idea of a redwood forest. So that is a strike against us. On the other hand, I've also talked to students of color from LA who say that this was a life-changing experience coming to Santa Cruz because they needed to be in a completely different environment from what they were used to. So there's different kinds of people. Some of them will thrive going from the urban environment to here. And others won't.

Reti: Yeah. Which is true of any group.

Blumenthal: It's true of any group. So I don't know what dominates it. But a lot of it has to do with where you recruit and how you recruit. So yes, it could be a problem. But it can also be an advantage.

There are other issues. I remember once years ago talking to our first African American graduate student in astronomy, who I like a lot. She ended up having a very good career. But she kind of blew me away one day. I asked her what are the challenges of being an African American student here? And she said the biggest challenge is there's no place in Santa Cruz I can get my hair cut.

Reti: Mm hmm. I've heard that one, for sure.

Blumenthal: In retrospect, it's obvious. But at the time, it blew my mind. I wouldn't have thought of that in a million years. But it's certainly true.

Reti: Mm hmm. Another point that I've heard related to diversity and outreach that I don't think we've talked about—which is tied into campus growth—is there are those people who say that if we don't grow, we won't be diverse, that increasing the number of student enrollments on campus is essential for increasing diversity. And then there are other people who say that's just an excuse and that we're using diversity as an argument for growth, but we don't really need to grow. Since this is something that's come up in several oral histories that I've done, I thought perhaps I should ask you about that.

Blumenthal: I'm not sure I have deep wisdom here. I would say the following: In terms of the faculty, and diversity among the faculty, growth is something that does enhance diversity of faculty because you're hiring more faculty at a time when you're paying more attention to diversity, and therefore, it does diversify the faculty. And to the extent that diversifying the faculty also diversifies the student body, I think that's an argument. So I get that piece of it. But short of that, since students turn over every four years, basically, I'm not sure that growth of the student population is directly tied to student diversity.

I think you could argue that as a campus grows, it forces us to expand the areas where we look for potential students into areas that might be more fruitful in terms of recruiting diverse students. So you could argue that campus growth would be an inducement for the campus to recruit more broadly and therefore increase diversity. On the other hand, we are as a campus making a conscious effort, irrespective of growth, to recruit from areas that would provide us students from more diverse backgrounds. So I'm not sure that that argument holds in terms of the direct thing. The indirect thing through faculty, I think is true.

Reti: The campus in its early days was small, intimate, and rather white. As we've gotten bigger, we've also gotten more racially diverse. Now whether those things are really tied together—

Blumenthal: Of course not.

Reti: They're not. So perhaps people associate them?

Blumenthal: It's possible people put them together. But the two big effects are the changing demographics of California. They've changed dramatically. And secondly, our policies have encouraged us to pursue a greater diversity.

Reti: So it's not just demographics.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: Sure.

So I put down a couple of awkward moments. I remember one meeting that I had that was really quite awkward. It was a meeting with trans students at a time when we were actually putting in place a number of programs in support of trans groups, for example, a restroom program where we were converting restrooms to make them more gender neutral. We were actually doing a fair amount at that time. But I remember meeting with students and they were so bitter and angry. I couldn't quite reconcile the level of anger we were hearing with what we were already doing. I, to this day, remain puzzled about that meeting.

Reti: Was it that you didn't really know what they wanted you to do?

Blumenthal: They had their lists of demands and stuff. But we were already doing a lot. You can always do more, of course. But I actually thought we had a program to be proud of. We were ahead of the curve, certainly compared to the other UC campuses. I think we got on this before everyone else did. So I was disappointed that there wasn't a more objective look at that.

And my wife, Kelly, had been heavily involved in LGBTQ issues for many, many years. She wrote this textbook that was the first book that looked at alternative families in family law, and has now been copied by everyone else. But for many years, and probably even including today among the LGBTQ community, most of them use her book because of that. She was involved in the friend of the court briefs for both of the Supreme Court decisions on gay marriage, on the right side, I might add.

Reti: (laughs) I would imagine.

Blumenthal: And she did graduation one year for the LGBT group.

Reti: Oh, the Rainbow Graduation.⁴²³

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Oh, wonderful.

Blumenthal: So I never quite understood the level of anger that I saw. That's why I was so puzzled by the trans group's anger at that particular meeting. I haven't experienced it since, but I also haven't met with them since, so there may be a correlation there.

The Black Students Association (BSA) Protests at Kerr Hall

The other awkward moment was the BSA, Black Student Association takeover of Kerr Hall, which was really frustrating and difficult. I had been meeting every month with the

Black Student Association and a group that was co-chaired by Michelle Whittingham⁴²⁴ and [someone else]. And we had had a task force which emerged from the Chancellor's Diversity Advisory Committee co-chaired by Michelle Whittingham. They looked at the situation for black students on the campus and made a whole bunch of recommendations, including, for example, hiring a counselor in the Student Health Center who had experience dealing with black student issues; a recruiter for black students; various other things that they recommended that we were actually moving on, although, probably from the BSA's perspective, at a snail's pace. You know how things are at the university.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: As I recall, we did one or both of those recruitments and they failed, so we had to do them a second time. And I had actually started meeting monthly with BSA and talking about issues with them, so I was quite surprised at the takeover of Kerr Hall. It was peaceful, no question about that. There were no issues of un-peacefulness. But they took over Kerr Hall and occupied it for a couple of days. I was annoyed because we were presented then with a list of demands that included things that had not been discussed, or raised by them in all of those meetings. I felt like I had done the right thing by meeting with them—the chancellor, no less—but they hadn't even presented some of those issues as issues.

I ultimately made a decision to agree to some of their demands, like for example, repainting the house that's set aside for African American students.

Reti: Rosa Parks House.

Blumenthal: Rosa Parks dorm. And a few other things as well. I agreed to do that if they left Kerr Hall.

From my perspective, they may feel differently—I had arranged to meet with them to discuss these final arrangements and they changed the rules at the end of the game and wanted to meet publicly in the public square in front of Kerr Hall. I wouldn't do it. They annoyed me tremendously by later saying I was afraid to do that, which was completely untrue. What I didn't want to do was make a public spectacle. So I felt that some of them didn't act in particularly good faith. Nevertheless, I did give in to some of their demands.

And it was made the more awkward by a couple of incidents that occurred. One was an incident with reporter where a reporter was shoved or something, something that the editor of the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* maybe still hasn't forgiven us for, for not doing more to have prevented. The other was an incident that was anti-Semitic at the Grad Commons, where some group had a table supporting Jewish students. I don't know what the organization was; I simply don't know, don't remember. But when the BSU students marched from there to Kerr Hall, somebody pushed over the table. Obviously, in my view, that was an act which violated our principles of community.

On top of that, there was the unfortunate aspect that, while I think I handled the issue of the post-traumatic stress of staff in Kerr Hall during the earlier Kerr Hall occupation, well, I don't even think I handled it very well after this particular occupation. There was a lot of staff concern, upset. They felt unsafe. They felt that we weren't listening to the concerns of staff. And they felt that we didn't have procedures in place to ensure their safety during an occupation. In that latter regard, they were right. We had gone soft. It had been many years now since we had the earlier Kerr Hall occupation. A lot of the safeguards that we had put in place at that time were dated—we'd let them go. We didn't have clear lines of communication, for example. We had set them up earlier, but we hadn't maintained them. So I think we deserved some of the criticism that we got afterwards.

But I was sufficiently annoyed that I made a decision, and I announced it very publicly, that I was drawing a line in the sand: with the next occupation of Kerr Hall, no matter what it was, there would be no negotiations. I would bring in police as soon as I possibly could to clear out Kerr Hall. I was not prepared to tolerate this again. The good news is, from my perspective, Kerr Hall has not again been occupied. Who knows what will happen in the next month?

Reti: (laughs) We're not going to publish this yet.

Blumenthal: But I was serious. I was dead serious. And I talked at some length to the press about this and to student publications and to student groups, that I wasn't going to play anymore. Obviously, because it was the black students who took over Kerr Hall, I didn't want the image of police coming in with clubs. I think that partly motivated me to be more willing to negotiate than I might otherwise have been. But be that as it may, I did draw a line in the sand, and I fully intended, and to the extent that I'm still chancellor, fully do intend to stick to that line in the sand. I won't tolerate an occupation of Kerr, he said as the marching students—

Reti: (laughs)

Martin Luther King Convocations

Blumenthal: Okay. I think we have two or three other things. MLK convocations. That's something we've done every year. They started before I was chancellor, and we were doing one every year. But I attended and spoke at every single MLK convocation we've had. We've done all of them in town at the civic auditorium. And I think, by and large, they've been very, very successful. We've had some really outstanding speakers coming in. We've had some okay speakers coming in as well, and maybe one or two who weren't super great. But, by and large, they've been outstanding speakers. Frequently I'd have dinner with

them beforehand, or we'd have a group dinner. That has been in many ways an inspiring event.

Probably for me, my favorite speaker by far was Julian Bond because Julian Bond was a boyhood hero of mine. When I was growing up, Julian Bond was this young guy in Georgia who was elected to the state legislature, one of the few, maybe only black legislators. He expressed his opposition to the war in Vietnam and they refused to seat him in the Georgia legislature. So he went to court, and I think he had to go maybe all the way to the Supreme Court and won, and then was seated in the Georgia legislature. I remember being so impressed with how articulate he was, how smart he was, and how principled he seemed to be. He was a lawyer. He did many things throughout his life. He didn't stay in the legislature that long. He later became the head of the NAACP. He was a major civil rights figure. He was a friend of Martin Luther King's. In fact, he was a student of Martin Luther King's. Martin Luther King taught some courses at, I forget which university. It's in the South. And Julian Bond was one of his students.

Julian told the story, which I'm sure was not true, but he kind of jokingly described walking across campus with Martin Luther King. King was telling him that he didn't sleep well the night before because he'd had a whole bunch of nightmares. And Julian Bond said, "So I said to him, 'I hope you can sleep better tonight so you can really have a dream.'"

Reti: (laughter)

Blumenthal: But Kelly and I had dinner with Julian Bond and his wife. His wife is also a lawyer. It was a truly enjoyable conversation. But he was a teenage hero of mine and it was just such a pleasure to meet him. I just can't say enough.

The MLK convocation has been a great community event. Our attendance has been increasing steadily. We've brought in a lot of high school students from Watsonville and Salinas and Monterey County. One of the things we do every year is we give a Tony Hill Award.⁴²⁵ Tony Hill, who was a black community activist who preached the message that we all really need to learn to get along with each other. He was a major figure within Santa Cruz. Shortly after I became chancellor, he just popped over and died, I think of a heart attack. And so the university actually established, and I was very much in favor of this, an award in his honor, the Tony Hill Memorial Award. We give it every year. We have quite an impressive list of recipients of the award. I think the founder of the Digital Nest won it last year. He's an alum.

So a great list of people. I present it every year in conjunction with Tony's widow and his daughter. It's great to see them every year. I'm really proud of the award. I'm proud of UCSC for doing this. I guess I was the chancellor that started it. I think it was the right thing to do, and it says a lot about our community. So, this is the best part of it.

It's always been a bit of a trying event because sometimes as chancellor, I've been jeered by the crowd. But I know it's because I'm chancellor. But it was interesting to me that, Deborah Johnson⁴²⁶ at Inner Light—she got really annoyed by that. So she started talking to students and saying, "You better not do that anymore." It was kind of funny. She's a wonderful person.

Reti: She is.

Blumenthal: She's the person who usually gives the invocation at the beginning. But I do think this was an impressive record for the campus.

UCSC Becomes a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

I want to say a word about HSI status, about achieving Hispanic Serving Institution status as a campus. It occurred I don't know, maybe five or six or seven years ago, I don't remember exactly when, but it was when we crossed the 25 percent line in terms of the percentage of Hispanic students enrolled and on the campus.⁴²⁷ I am very proud of that. I think that was a real achievement for us. We became a member of the Hispanic HSI Alliance, I've attended some of their meetings, which shares information. We've received two grants so far from the Department of Education, which we were eligible for only because of our HSI status. One of those grants was the one I mentioned earlier with San Jose City College to encourage transfer by students, particularly Hispanic students, but open to all students. I think that's a great program.

We've also worked, to some extent, with the Hispanic Foundation. You know, Ron Gonzales, who's the president of that foundation, is an alum of Santa Cruz. He is the former mayor of San Jose.

Reti: Really? I didn't know that.

Blumenthal: Yeah. He's a Santa Cruz alum. A proud Santa Cruz alum. So we worked with him on a few things as well. And, oh, CDAC. So, do you have another couple of minutes just to finish this one?

Reti: Yeah, absolutely.

Blumenthal: So, when Mark Yudof was president, I honest to God don't remember what the initiating thing that got him to do this was, but it was something about black students that was going on. Maybe it was a series of incidents at Irvine, I think, had been taking place, or maybe it's San Diego, things having to do with barbecues and stuff that were

offensive, quite offensive. I don't remember what the incidents were, but they were racist incidents. Yudof felt like he had to do something about this. So decided that we were going to move toward doing climate surveys on the campuses. He wanted every campus to establish a committee. I forgot the original name of the committee, because we've since changed it to CDAC, Chancellor's Diversity Advisory Committee. But it had an earlier name, and I don't remember what the name was. He wanted all of the chancellors to chair the committee, and to oversee climate on the campuses.

So we did that. I think we did a really good job compared to most of the campuses. He appointed Chris Edley to oversee the process. We met a few times with Chris. I think he was quite impressed with what we did. I have chaired that committee ever since we formed it. I still continue to chair it. It's the only committee I chair on campus besides my cabinet.

It was a very representative membership group. We tried to include every conceivable subgroup on campus. So it's a large group of forty or so people and it included not just people from on campus; we put some off campus people on, including representatives from the interfaith community and other community representatives. We had students, staff, faculty, administrators, and every group we could think of on the committee. Every conceivable minority group was represented in some way. Disabled services, all of that.

And we decided that they were futzing around so long to do a climate survey of the system that we decided to do our own climate survey. So we did a climate survey. Our thinking was, why not do our own climate survey, and see what we see, and get a jump start? And then we can look and see when they do the real climate survey with everybody, if we've made any progress.

So we did it. We put a lot of work into it, a lot of work, and a lot of data analysis into it as well, working with Planning and Budget folks. Our climate survey—we contracted with somebody to help us do it, probably somebody at UCLA. It may have been Sylvia Hurtado.

We got the results and we put in a lot of effort to compare it to other places. What I was really interested in was seeing what we could do as a result of the climate survey. So we actually put in place some subcommittees to come up with a plan for how we might address some of the issues. There were way too many issues to address them all, but we addressed some of them. My recollection is that the first ones that we addressed had to do with issues of disability and disability services on campus.

And then, finally, they did this systemwide climate study, where all of the campuses participated. That was interesting. That was presented to the regents. It was kind of a weird thing because you can kind of present this as being either really good or really bad. And guess how the university chose to represent it? (Reti laughs) That's fair. In some ways, that's fair. In some ways, the vast majority of UC people consider the climate of the university as generally good. On the other hand, there are subgroups within the university who don't feel that way. Or even if they do feel that way, they feel that way less strongly and have significant things that they would like to see changed or addressed.

So again, we did the same thing again. We put together a bunch of subgroups. They made a whole bunch of recommendations. We implemented some of those recommendations. I felt pretty proud of what we had done. Did we address everything on campus? No way, no how did we do that. We could only do a certain number of things. But we did do some things, and we actually followed through. And people took it seriously. And they met as subcommittees. The only way we could do this work was through subcommittees that looked at data and came up with a series of recommendations. What was so impressive is

that the recommendations that came through tended to be things that we could actually do. You know, you can come up with pie in the sky recommendations, but our subcommittees came up with things that were actually achievable.

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: So I was very pleased with those efforts. CDAC continues today. We haven't done a survey again for years now. We've evolved the approach of the group a little bit, but it continues through today. There are moments in history when a group like that could be really effective and important. It may not be every year. But I think that as events change and as people get concerned about different things, it can change. You know, one year there's a lot of concern about police shooting black people. That's an issue that we can discuss and try to deal with, what is currently on people's minds. This committee has been able to be there at that moment. Is this committee going to continue? For me, it was completely discretionary to have this committee. So it will be up to the next chancellor whether she wants to continue it. I'd be surprised if she didn't want to continue it. The question is, is she going to want to chair it?

Reti: So this is June 24, 2019, and this is Irene Reti. And I'm here with Chancellor George Blumenthal, for our 37th interview in the oral history we're doing together. And this is the last week that Chancellor Blumenthal will be in office here, although we will continue this oral history a bit past that. So today, George, we're going to start by talking about the Hispanic Serving Institution status for UCSC and how that came about and what it means.

Blumenthal: Yeah. That was really a major milestone for the campus, to achieve HSI status, Hispanic-Serving Institution status. To get to HSI status, the campus needed to be 25 percent students of Hispanic or Latino background. We passed that threshold some years ago; I don't know, maybe it's seven or eight years ago at this point. It was a big deal.

But you don't become a Hispanic-Serving Institution just by passing the threshold. You actually have to apply for grants and be certified by the federal government, which we soon did. So we quickly passed that threshold as well. We were one of the first campuses in UC to do this. I think we were second to Riverside, who had achieved HSI status first. Since then, I think Merced, I think Santa Barbara; and I'm not sure, Davis has either done it, or they're close.

Reti: But not UCLA.

Blumenthal: But not UCLA, not Berkeley.

Reti: I find that puzzling, given the greater population of Latinos in both of those urban areas.

Blumenthal: Yeah, but they don't necessarily attract solely from their urban areas. Also remember, they get a lot of foreign students. They may be approaching it, but they're not there yet.

Anyway, I think this is really important for us as a campus—first of all, to be out there to be one of the very first. It's also important that we are an R1 university who achieved that. There aren't that many R1 universities that achieve the HSI status.

We quickly got two grants from the Department of Education, in collaboration with San Jose City College. The grants are meant to encourage STEM transfer students. From what I can tell, they've been extremely successful. I think they've increased our transfer students from that area in San Jose. And it's also, I think served to help develop the relationship between, in particular, that community college and the campus. But we could do more and I think there are efforts to try to do more than that. This has just been a very good story for the campus.

We've translated that. One of the places that we've worked with, there is an organization of, whose name I can't remember, Hispanic-Serving Institutions. We do participate in their meetings. I've gone to a few of their meetings of presidents of those institutions. And in addition, we've worked with other organizations. One that I think has been particularly helpful is the Hispanic Foundation, which has its headquarters in San Jose. The president of that organization is, interestingly enough, Ron Gonzales, the former mayor of San Jose, who's also a banana slug.⁴²⁸ He's an alum, a very proud alum, of UC Santa Cruz. So we've worked with Ron on a number of issues related to Hispanic students. And we now host some of their meetings in our Silicon Valley facility.

Media and Communications

So next I'm going to talk about editorials and op eds briefly. I didn't go back and review all my editorials and op eds. But interestingly enough, the very first one I ever wrote was in defense of Bob Dynes. I had just come back to campus. I'd come back from my term as a senate chair. I was a faculty member back here. And that's when Compensation Gate hit. As I indicated in an earlier session, when I was up there I'd actually argued against a lot of the compensations that they had done, and argued with Dynes about it. But nevertheless, when this hit, everyone was calling for his head, including the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* in an editorial. I remember reading that and thinking, all they're doing is reacting to one thing, and there's twenty different things that he's been involved with. So I wrote a letter to the editor; it wasn't really an op ed, just a letter to the editor. I remember struggling because I had to fit it into some word limit and the way they counted words was different than the way I counted words, so I got cheated out of a word or two. (Reti laughs) But in any event, I wrote a defense and pointed out that he had done many good things as well, and I proceeded to list them. So I wrote this. I just sort of got it off my chest. I didn't think anything more about it. The next thing I see, it's the lead thing in *UC News*

Clips, which often doesn't even cover the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*. That was really my first, first time I'd ever written to the editor of a newspaper, or done anything in a newspaper. But I felt pretty strongly about it and I was glad I had an opportunity to do it.

Since becoming chancellor, I've written a number of op eds. I had the great fortune of working with Jennifer McNulty for a number of years. Jennifer is well-connected to a number of newspapers. She had a close friend who worked for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, for example, so I wrote several for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. And I also had a good relationship with Tanya Schevitz, who was kind of universally hated at UC. But I thought I worked well with her. We didn't always agree.

Reti: Mm hmm. We talked about some of the times that she called you for a quote and some of the ways you handled that.

Blumenthal: So fortunately they published several of my op-eds. I think I may have posted a few in other newspapers. My op-eds really tended to have something to say and a couple of them were, I thought, quite interesting, and got a number of comments. One of them was where I pointed out that the state funding for higher education had decayed so much over the years, since the beginning when I was a student. I don't know what baseline I used in the op-ed. But my main point was: this is now the time when we finally have large numbers of first-generation students, students of color, under-represented minorities. And this is just the moment when the state has kind of pulled the rug out from state funding for higher education. And how completely inappropriate it is to do it at a time that is disadvantageous to first-gen students or underrepresented students. That was one of my op-eds. That was actually pretty well-received within the UC community.

Another op-ed I wrote had to do with national policy on higher education. It was basically making the case for there having to be greater involvement of the federal government in

the funding of public higher education. I argued that the states were unlikely to do it by themselves in an adequate way, and they really needed to get more out of the federal government. That was basically the point of the op-ed. I think that was in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, as well. I got a lot of mail from that one—all negative, just about. This was pie in the sky, how unrealistic could I be? But I think I was actually, on a principled level, right. I don't deny that certainly at the time it was pie in the sky, although I still remain hopeful that things could change.

Reti: Were the people writing you these emails people from within the higher education community, or the general public?

Blumenthal: Mostly people who I had no idea who they were. And of course they were the comments in the online comment section. I finally, after that one, developed my policy that I don't read comments anymore. (laughs)

Reti: What a toxic pool to jump into.

Blumenthal: It is a toxic pool. Anyway, it was fun to write those op-eds. I may actually do some more of it now that I've got a little bit more free time on my hands, even if I don't have the contacts. I've also written a number for the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* as well, on a variety of issues of local concern.

Reti: I remember that you wrote one talking about why you were supporting the 28,000 enrollment goal for UCSC.

Blumenthal: Yep.

Reti: Yes. And how was that received?

Blumenthal: I am so sorry, Irene, but by the time I wrote that op-ed, I stopped looking at comments. I'm sure I got mail, but—

Reti: Yeah. I just didn't know if it maybe helped people understand some of your position in a positive way.

Blumenthal: The goal was to help people understand. But I know now that any time you take a public position, people will come out of the woodwork and say all kinds of stuff. It just doesn't make a lot of sense to me to actually pay a lot of attention to it. But it took me years to get to that place. I'm sorry, but that's just how I feel.

So the other thing that I did was meet with editorial boards. I'll mention three types in particular. One are more national or publicly well-known newspapers outside of Santa Cruz. One of the most interesting ones was when I met with the *San Francisco Chronicle* editorial board. I was surprised to get the meeting. I have a feeling Tanya and Jennifer had something to do with it. They asked me a lot of good questions and then they wrote an editorial about UC Santa Cruz. It's up there on the office wall. I was very proud of the fact that they wrote an editorial about UCSC after I visited them.

And I also met with the *San Jose Mercury* a number of times; the *Sacramento Bee*. I never met with the *LA Times* editorial board, although I've grown closer to their higher education reporters.

Reti: So, I'm trying to understand, what does it mean to meet with an editorial board?

Blumenthal: Every newspaper has an editorial board. They're the group that decides what the editorial policy of the paper is. They don't write the editorials, but they approve the positions of the editorials. The editorial board is usually led by the editor-in-chief, and—

Reti: What were they wanting from you in a meeting, or what were you wanting from them? More attention for UCSC?

Blumenthal: I was looking for more attention for UCSC. Plain and simple. And they were looking at me for insights into higher education policy.

Reti: That's what I wondered, because I know you wear both hats.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So that's kind of why I did it with those publications. I also met with some folks at the *Chronicle of Higher Education* when I was in Washington. So I have tried to do that, not as much as maybe I should have, but I certainly have tried to do that.

But I started out right almost from the beginning meeting with the *Sentinel* editorial board. It was a completely interesting experience. I'll never forget my first meeting. I was the acting chancellor. I'd been doing this for a month or two or three, not very long. A decision was made to meet with the *Sentinel* editorial board. It was so long ago that we actually met in the Sentinel building.

Reti: Before they moved to Scotts Valley.

Blumenthal: Before they moved to Scotts Valley. What I remember, though, was all of the stress of the people around here. The stress of Jim Burns, who I have huge admiration for. I think Jim Burns is fantastic.⁴²⁹ But Tom Vani was really stressed. I don't remember who the whole team was, but I remember Jim and Tom were there. They were really nervous. And I had a sense that a part of it was because M.R.C. really hated to meet with the *Sentinel* editorial board. I can get that she really didn't like doing that because one of her techniques was to just speak for long periods of time. (Reti laughs) They won't put up with that.

Anyway, we went down and had this meeting. It was fine. It was all about policy and issues like that. That is my strong suit. I thought it was friendly, I thought their questions were good. Yes, of course, they asked some critical questions, but I thought they were fair. I actually was quite impressed with the nature of their questioning and I enjoyed the experience, which was kind of in contrast with what everyone had led me to expect it would be.

Reti: Oh, great.

Blumenthal: Since then, I've met fairly regularly with the *Sentinel* editorial board. Of course, most of this time Don Miller was the editor. I think he was a really good editor of the *Sentinel*. He's underappreciated in the community. I think when he was made editor of both the *Sentinel* and the *Monterey Herald*, that was way too much for him and he ultimately did retire. I thought that his replacement—Kara Guzman—I thought she was fantastic. Young, energetic. I thought she was really going to move that newspaper in a great direction. So I was really pleased. And Kara, as a journalist, has always been fair and honest. So I was delighted when she was chosen, and really horribly disappointed when things fell apart for her at the *Sentinel*.⁴³⁰

But I've kept it up with them. I used to meet quarterly with them four times a year. We haven't met as regularly in the last few years, partly because they haven't had a place to be. And it's been interesting to watch the decline, even in Scotts Valley. They had a huge newsroom and it's shrunk and shrunk and shrunk over the years. Every time I went there, they were occupying less of the building. And then finally they moved back to Santa Cruz. It's been sad to see.

I will give them credit. After I met with them a few times and I had a good relationship with them, they asked me about their coverage of UCSC and what did I think of it. So I

gave them an honest answer. I told them that I thought that they spent far too much time on controversial or uncomfortable issues. I think controversial, uncomfortable issues have an important place to play in the press. But I thought they did this at the expense of actually talking about some of the really exciting stuff going on at the campus. I gave them five or six examples of things that I thought were really exciting and transformative happening on campus that they'd never covered. To give them credit, they actually listened to me and I noticed their coverage changed. Yes, they still covered the uncomfortable, awkward stuff, but they do also cover some really exciting things now. And I give them a lot of credit for having taken that to heart.

Then they decided to have a citizens panel be their editorial board. So they decided to have not just journalists, or people like that, but to have a rotating editorial board with people going on and off. They even asked me for the names of some students who might serve on their editorial board. The reality was very few people came on it. When people came on, they didn't stay long and they weren't replaced. So in fact, Ceil Cerillo was the one person who was always at editorial board meetings. She took it seriously; she was really committed. I think it's important to acknowledge that her commitment to the community was such that she really felt this was important. She was a key part of that board for many years, even though I think the intention was only to have her on it for one year, or maybe two.

The *Sentinel* was bought many years ago by a company that does investments and they are still, so far as I'm aware, a profit-making organization, but largely because of all of the cutbacks that they've made. They have far, far fewer staff compared to what they used to be. I know Ceil has worked diligently to try to find a buyer for the paper, and she's still working on that. The hope is to find a local buyer and make it a true community newspaper.

Reti: Oh, that would be fabulous.

Blumenthal: That's her goal. So far, unsuccessfully. Part of the problem may be the price that they're asking for it. It still is a profitable newspaper. So it's a really sad decline but I do think that they try to do a good job. I think that they, over the years, hired good reporters. But I also think the fact that people like Mark Des Jardines, who now works for us, who was kind of anxious to leave, tells you that it isn't the place that people hoped it would be. So, time will tell.

Blumenthal: The other editorial group that I meet with regularly—and that means every quarter since I've been chancellor—is the student press. So those have been sometimes interesting, sometimes lively discussions with the student press. But I've actually enjoyed them. I do look forward to them. And the student press, though they can be critical, are usually informed. I really appreciate the fact that they are generally informed.

Reti: Now is there a group actually called the Student Press and you meet with them all at once?

Blumenthal: Yeah, I meet with them all at once. It includes, *City on a Hill*, *Leviathan*, *Fish Wrap*, KZSC.

Reti: Oh, okay, great. I'm sure that makes it much easier for you.

Blumenthal: That's right. So what we would typically do is I'd make some opening remarks and then we would just keep going around the table and letting each media outlet ask a question, and then go on to the next one. It also gives them a chance to do follow-up questions, which is sometimes very helpful as well. So I think it was really good. And one of the changes I made about four years ago, maybe five years ago, is I decided we needed to include the EVC in this press briefing. Because sometimes the questions were

at a level of detail that I had no idea what the answer was. Sometimes the EVC just had a better perception. So I started that with Alison and continued it with Marlene. They often asked really good questions. The most challenging outlet was always the *Fish Wrap*.⁴³¹ I will never forget the first question they ever asked me at my first press conference with them. They asked me if I could, on the spot, compose a haiku to the expansion of the universe.

Reti: Expansion of the universe?

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: Not the expansion of the university. (laughs) Did you?

Blumenthal: I did.

Reti: Do you remember it?

Blumenthal: No, I don't.

Reti: It's in a back issue of the *Fish Wrap* somewhere.

Blumenthal: Yeah, some back issue of the *Fish Wrap* would have it. They often asked me very interesting and challenging questions.

Reti: (laughs) Wow. That's great!

Blumenthal: Not that the other places didn't.

Reti: Right. Now you've been chancellor during a period of time in which the web and social media have expanded tremendously. I realize that when M.R.C. and Denice were here, it was already beginning. But certainly since 2006, things have changed dramatically. I know that you have a website that is very extensive, with all of your

different speeches you've made and other kinds of media. I'm not sure if there's a question in there, but just an observation that this has been a change in the position of chancellor during your period.

Blumenthal: Yeah, and I don't know that I've necessarily adapted to the changes well. I think I've done more than previous chancellors, but I don't think I'm fully adapted. We do have a more extensive website with resources there on the chancellor's site. And for a while, maybe three, four, five years, I did write a blog regularly, which was interesting, but it never got the readership that justified the work to do it. I will also admit to you that I have studiously avoided using social media. For me, this was a hard and an easy decision. I wasn't real anxious to adopt something new and expand into a whole new area where I'd have to devote a lot of time and attention.

Reti: Like being on Twitter, for example.

Blumenthal: Like being on Twitter.

Reti: Right.

Blumenthal: I know Marlene does that and she does it quite effectively. But she devotes a lot of her time to Twitter. I'll be somewhere with her and I can see her pecking away, getting her next tweet out. I respect that, and I think it's a good thing, but it isn't something that's in my character.

Relatively early on in my chancellorship I had dinner with my daughter Sarah. And I asked her, I said, "Look, what do you think? I know that the chancellor at UCLA has a Facebook account and communicates to students through Facebook. Do you think this is a good thing for me to do? Should I adopt this?"

And she was quite unambiguous and said no. She said, “Social media in general, and Facebook in particular—your students are all on it. It’s our space. It’s students’ space. We don’t want you in our space, and so my advice to you, Dad, is don’t do it.”

Since I wasn't really anxious to do it, although I would have, if induced, I was happy to take her advice. So I really have not, I don't even at this point have a Facebook account, although I'll probably get one now that I'm no longer chancellor. But that isn't how I want to communicate to the world.

Reti: Right. I think we touched on this related question about communication—this isn't really about media, per se, but I think we touched on this before, but we didn't really talk about it that much—to what extent do you have office hours? I know you're meeting with student media. But do you also have regular hours where you meet with students?

Blumenthal: So the way we've handled office hours is on the website we put a place where you can sign up to meet with the chancellor. Students do do that. It isn't a particular set of hours in the day. My schedule's way too chaotic to make that work, so instead, we just do it by appointment. And generally speaking, I've always been willing to meet with faculty. When a faculty member is calling for a meeting, I'll usually meet with them, which I know isn't the standard thing for chancellors to do.

Reti: Really?

Blumenthal: Yeah. I mean, the usual thing is that the chancellor won't meet with faculty unless the dean and maybe the EVC are present. I am willing to meet with faculty alone. I understand the reasons why it's unusual, and why many chancellors choose not to go down that road. But I came into this office as a member of the faculty. It's my faculty background which was one of my strengths, and it didn't feel comfortable to me not to

talk to faculty if I was chancellor. So I've actually met with a lot of faculty individually over the years. So that answers your question about office hours.

I was going to say a little bit more, just a couple more comments on the student press. I thought the student press asked good questions. There were occasions when I was really surprised by the articles that were written after one of these student press sessions. Because I was sometimes surprised by the articles that appeared. They got facts wrong, or sometimes they got the story wrong. That was very disappointing to me. But overall, I have very positive feelings about the student press and how they conducted themselves over the years. They were respectful; they did a good job. Even if I complain about a story or two, I think they really tried very hard to get it right. And I love the *Fish Wrap*.

Reti: (laughs) That's great. It's amazing they're still around after all these years.

Blumenthal: And now we go to strategic planning.

Reti: All right.

Strategic and Academic Planning

Blumenthal: All right. So we've been through several strategic planning exercises on this campus over the years. Let me just make a few general comments. First, I think when you do strategic planning, whether it be campus planning or whether it be academic planning, it's important to have broad involvement of constituents. You need to get people involved; you need to give people the opportunity to have some meaningful input into ideas, and you need the people to help you to identify what are going to be the key issues in any plan that you are going to come up with. But for a plan to be successful, it ultimately is going to have to be much more top-down to really be a successful plan. Otherwise it's

like a camel where you think it's produced by committee. (Reti laughs) A meaningful plan does have to have a single person who takes responsibility for it.

And even when you come up with a plan, even if you've done it all right, the key is the implementation of the plan. You can come up with the most beautiful plan in the world, but if you don't really implement it, or do a good job implementing it, it's useless. So those are my general comments about academic or strategic planning.

Reti: I've heard several people say that we didn't really ever have an academic plan at UCSC. And I don't know if that's really true. I know we had sort of the beginnings of one a few times. Do campuses usually have academic plans? (laughs)

Blumenthal: I think campuses usually do have academic plans. The theory behind academic plans, certainly from the senate perspective, is that it provides a blueprint for what you need: what kind of faculty you need to hire; what kind of buildings you need to build; labs versus classrooms; and stuff like that. And all that does make sense, to a certain extent. But, of course, the danger of academic plans is that they can become rigid and prevent you from doing new things. I mean twenty years ago if I told you there was going to be a department of biomolecular engineering, you might have thought I was nuts. Those words may not have even made sense to you.

Reti: Sure. Bioinformatics, or some of these words that we never heard twenty or thirty years ago.

Blumenthal: Exactly. So you need flexibility in the way you develop as well. It's possible to be too rigid in the way you do academic planning. So having said that, has there been an academic plan? I'm not an expert on this, I hasten to add. I'll talk about the 2002 plan. But prior to that, the main academic planning effort that I'm aware of is when Michael Tanner was the EVC and he was pushing managing faculty resources, MFR. I think in

some sense, MFR represented a kind of academic planning because it was a blueprint for how you would allocate resources on the campus. It wasn't a plan in the sense of being a visionary document, but it was a plan that did tell you in a very nitty gritty way how resources should be allocated, for better or for worse. It was for most people, including me, too formulaic in its conception. But it was a plan of sorts. And before that, I'm sure there were academic plans, but I'm not familiar with that.

Reti: Okay, fine. Fair enough.

Blumenthal: So the first academic plan I had any involvement with was in 2002, when John Simpson was the EVC and I was the senate chair. M.R.C. had assigned to John the task of coming up with this strategic academic plan. And it was kind of funny because every now and then I'd check in with John and say, "How's the plan coming?" He'd say, "Oh, it's coming along fine," but I had the real sense that he really didn't have a plan, and that one wasn't coming along fine, that there was no vision. At one point M.R.C. and I agreed to have, I think it was a retreat of sort to talk about a variety of campus issues, and I put on the retreat agenda the strategic academic plan because I thought people would be interested in hearing where it was. I don't think John, even at that point, had a very clear idea. I know that he worked with Meredith Michaels to try to come up with some document and ultimately, he did produce a plan. So there is a strategic plan of that period that John largely produced by himself, or with Meredith. I have very little recollection of that plan, because I thought it was quite unimpressive.

But, having said that, I do know they worked on an implementation plan. I actually liked their implementation plan. So I'm in this weird situation where I'm telling you I like the way they were going to implement it, but I didn't necessarily have a lot of feelings about

it itself, the it that they were going to implement. But I thought that the implementation plan had some interesting elements to it, and actually added a lot to the strategic plan.

Reti: Do you remember any details about that?

Blumenthal: No, I don't. And I don't think they ever did anything with it.

Reti: Okay. Yeah.

Blumenthal: Because remember, once I was done being chair and left, it wasn't long thereafter that John left.

Reti: Uh-huh. I see.

Blumenthal: And then not long after that, M.R.C. left.

So that was my first experience with the strategic academic plan. The next one was done by Dave Kliger. That one came out around 2007 or so. It was Dave working with Alison Galloway, who was then vice-provost for academic affairs. And this academic plan mirrored the academic plan that Dave had done when he was the dean of PB Sci. He did an academic plan for PB Sci a few years earlier that was very thematic, and tried to fit the work within the division into various themes and threads that wound their way through the division. On the one hand, that was kind of interesting, to look at those themes. On the other hand, they were a little bit arbitrary, I thought, at the time. It's like he was trying to stuff apples and oranges into a basket and call them fruit. They weren't exactly the same thing. So Dave's strategic plan that he and Alison came up with—and by the way, this was important to Dave. It was really important to him. I'm sure he must have discussed it in his oral history.

Reti: He did.

Blumenthal: Because when I talked to Dave about why he didn't want to be the campus chancellor, when he recommended me, his primary reason that he gave me was that he was partway through working on the strategic academic plan, and he thought it would be helpful to the campus if he finished it.

So anyway, they came up with a plan. It was a very thematic plan; again, somewhat forced, but it did have themes running through it, and I thought that it was interesting in that regard. I thought it was something that really could be a benefit to the campus. It was awkward in that some parts of the campus didn't fit neatly into the plan. But you know, nothing is perfect. I actually thought it was a pretty good plan. It showed a lot of foresight and insight, and had potential to be the themes that would drive the campus forward over the next few years.

It was, however, interrupted by the great recession. Once the great recession happened, all bets were off. And remember, these plans take a while: you do the plan, you finish it, then you send it over to the Academic Senate and they get months to agonize over the plan, make the criticisms. Then it comes back and you make some changes. So these things, even if you think you're done, you're not really done until it's gone through that process. So it took a while to really feel as though we were on a path to the implementation of that plan. And then came the great recession. We weren't thinking about planning; we were thinking about avoiding disaster during the great recession.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: So that was the next planning exercise we did. The next one we did—

Reti: George, so in your notes you said it was interrupted by the great recession and by rebenching.

Blumenthal: Oh, yes, I'm sorry. That's the other thing. This is about the time that rebenching happened as well. Rebenching changed the ground rules. For example, one of the big ground rule changes for the campus, which we have not adequately addressed, is the need to grow our graduate programs, which are essential from a rebenching perspective. So that kind of stirred the pot and made the ground rules very, very different as well. Thank you for reminding me of that.

So the next big plan was Envision UCSC, which was a campus strategic plan. The movers on this one were Alison Galloway and Peggy Delaney.

Reti: So this is not just an academic plan—

Blumenthal: No, this is a strategic plan for the campus.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: They really wanted to do it and they had attended some workshops from people who did these kinds of plans. They thought it would be a good thing for the campus to do. I was definitely on board, but a little bit more skeptical. But I was definitely onboard. I agreed to do it and to meet with a planning group on a regular basis.

Reti: What was the nature of your skepticism?

Blumenthal: I was skeptical because we were involving so many people. I was afraid that what would come out would be a consensus rather than a plan.

Reti: Oh, okay, I see.

Blumenthal: And to some extent, that was true. But it was a plan that came out of this. But there was a lot of campus involvement. I was actually very pleased by how many people were willing to devote considerable time and effort into developing that plan—we

had a lot of meetings and a lot of really robust discussion. At the end of the day, Envision identified six important areas that the campus should emphasize. I think that was a useful result. I think it was a useful framework for how the campus developed. I could show you, or we could show you how we as a campus have responded in those six areas. They did form the core of how we were trying to move forward as a campus.

However, having said that, I will also say nothing revolutionary came out of this. It wasn't as though we suddenly decided we had to go off in a new direction. It was really continuing the direction we were going in, but it was a much more systematic way of looking at what we needed to do as a campus to be successful. I think it was useful in that regard. So that was Envision UCSC.

I might add, some people would say it was a failure, because nothing particularly noteworthy emerged from it. There's no one bottom line that you can say, "This accomplished X, Y, Z." There was six goals: that was the major thing that came out of Envision.

And now, the next one was our strategic academic plan of 2019. It's now just being finalized, having had senate review. On this one, the key players were Marlene, who I think was the key driving force behind it, and Martin Berger,⁴³² who's no longer here. But Martin was the guy who actually kind of made this all work and really brought it together. And Herbie Lee as well, who's kind of playing that role now. Those were the key players in our strategic academic planning.

I had asked Marlene to engage in a strategic academic plan. The senate wanted it, I know. I had had discussions with CPB about it before Marlene was even here, and she was quite happy to do that. I thought with someone like Marlene, who was really used to thinking out of the box, I thought some really good stuff could come out of it.

So again, we got lots of input. They did a lot of outreach to faculty on campus. It was clear very early on that one of the keys of the strategic plan would be collaboration across departmental and divisional lines. We wanted to encourage that because it's been a strength of the campus, but it's something that could easily go away. Or to say it a different way, more positively, we could exploit that strength and move it further along.

So one of the things they did in the plan was they looked at barriers to collaboration across divisions. I think that was a useful thing to do. They also solicited collaborative ventures that would be put forward. And they got a bunch. There must have been thirty or forty of them that came in. I remember going through and reading them all. There were a lot.

And so they went through an iterative process of getting some of those collaborative ventures to merge with one another, if you know what I mean, so that they would form larger things, but there would be fewer of them. And ultimately it got whittled down to three major areas, at least at the inception: Earth's future, digital interventions, and justice in a changing world—with the idea that this doesn't have to be it, that over time others could pop up and replace, either in addition to or replace one of these if it seemed appropriate.

But we did get lots of proposals and faculty interest. This is not a traditional plan in the sense of: here's how many labs we need; here's how many classrooms we need; etcetera. Put ten faculty here and twenty faculty there. It's not traditional in that sense, but it's actually quite exciting. I'm actually excited at the involvement of some of our best faculty in these ventures. Certainly some of the best faculty on campus, the Sandy Fabers, the Dave Hausslers, are super excited about this and they want to move this forward as quickly as possible. There is resistance in other quarters on campus, so we'll see how this all plays out in the end.

Reti: How would you describe the nature of that resistance?

Blumenthal: This is not traditional academic planning.

Reti: People want something more traditional.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Which would be more like, this is how many labs we need—

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: And, yeah.

Blumenthal: So this is kind of a TBD, to be determined.

Reti: Right. We're still in the middle of it.

Blumenthal: We haven't really done a full implementation plan yet, number one. Number two, we have a new chancellor and a new EVC, so they're going to have to decide how committed they are to this. I think things are a little bit up in the air right now.

Reti: And in doing this plan, my recollection is the campus worked with a company, Entangled Solutions.

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Was that successful?

Blumenthal: I think it was. My sense is that it was. It would be interesting to get Marlene's perspective, but I think Marlene would say it was very useful. It might not have been able to work if we hadn't had the advantage of their insights. It's not unusual for strategic planning to work with a company.

Reti: Sure. And I think that the previous effort did as well, if I remember right.

Blumenthal: Yes.

So the next one is the Highway Six.

Student Activism

So a few years ago, six protestors decided to block Highway 1 in order to protest something. They blocked the highway for literally hours, in the middle of the day. They were all students and they chained themselves together using barrels in a technique that's really hard to separate them out, without cutting off an arm or something. It was a very effective way to blockade a highway, using these heavy barrels, and using this mechanism of putting their arms in these things that couldn't be easily detached.

Reti: And this blockade was where Highway 1 and 17 come together. It was really the entrance to the freeway.

Blumenthal: Yeah. It was a major thing. And it was dangerous. It was dangerous because it basically stopped traffic for hours and hours. I think it was potentially dangerous because ambulances couldn't have gotten through. How would you feel if you were in an ambulance being rushed to the hospital and you're stuck on the freeway because some protestors had chained themselves together? They did a very good job of keeping it secret till the end and they had some infrastructure, trucks, whatever, vans, to drop off their barrels and themselves. But it was really bad and the community was really unhappy and annoyed by this.

Reti: Do you recall why they were chaining themselves together?

Blumenthal: You want to know the honest truth? I don't remember what they were protesting. I'm sure that they tried to make that clear, but to me, that was almost a secondary or tertiary issue. I'm sure I read it at the time, but I don't even remember it anymore, so that's how important it was to me to know what they were protesting.

Alison Galloway came to me and said, "How would I feel if we suspended those students?" I said, "I think we should suspend those students. They're a public danger." Ultimately, they were convicted and got thirty-days jail time, as I recall.

Reti: Did they get suspended as well?

Blumenthal: Yes, they did. They did get suspended. And they subsequently filed lawsuits against me and the university. So far as I'm aware, those lawsuits may still be ongoing.

Reti: Okay. Well, just when you said that, it made me wonder if a chancellor is personally liable.

Blumenthal: That's a fair question. I expect as chancellor that I'm covered by the university for anything that I do in my role as chancellor.

Reti: I would think so.

Blumenthal: So that's just not an issue. In fact, when lawsuits are filed and I'm named in the lawsuit, usually the first thing UC does is go to court and have me personally removed from the lawsuit. But I lose no sleep over being named.

Reti: Okay. All right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I don't even remember why they were protesting. I'm sure they had reasons. But it was just the wrong thing to do. And let me just say a word—I may have said this at an earlier time—yes, this is civil disobedience; this is disobedience of the law in pursuit of some social action. But there is no way that this is civil disobedience in the same way as sitting in at a segregated lunch counter in the South in the '60s, where the civil disobedience is directed at that issue at which you are protesting. These students were not protesting freeways. They were protesting other things and they were using this inconvenience to the community as a way of making people notice them. To me, that's a completely different type of civil disobedience in terms of moral authority. This was an act, in some ways, of violence, because of the danger it posed for people, for example, needing medical attention.

Reti: Yes. Okay.

Blumenthal: So this was at most a moderately interesting little incident, not particularly important.

Reti: Okay. Great. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So let's turn to 4/20.

Reti: (laughs) I love the look on your face, which we can't get into the transcript.

Blumenthal: All right, 4/20. You know, the irony of 4/20 is that I didn't even know what 4/20 was when I became chancellor. I didn't have a clue when it was first mentioned to me. Nor did I even realize that it was a campus tradition to celebrate 4/20. So this was quite an eye opener for me. I think one year we had seven or eight thousand people here, maybe even 10,000 people at 4/20. It was a big deal and not something we were very happy about. That's the last thing we needed for our campus reputation.

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Blumenthal: So at first, the way we responded was that we restricted campus access. Yes, we have a lot of students who go to 4/20. That's, I guess, fine. But we also had a lot of people from the Santa Cruz community come and we had a lot of people coming from quite far away to attend 4/20 in Santa Cruz. But included among those who attended, over the years, have been a lot of Santa Cruz students, high school students, which worries me because they aren't all that mature. I also am worried because we've had a number of parents come with little babies to 4/20, which also troubles me in some ways with regard to safety.

Reti: I didn't realize that. Gosh.

Blumenthal: And we later learned—and I'll get to this in a few minutes, that sometimes people have brought weapons to 4/20. So 4/20 is not happily celebrated by the authorities on the campus, is what I'm trying to say.

In the early years when I was chancellor, we tried to deal with this by closing off both entrances to campus. We used to have a kiosk at both entrances, and we had police there, and we would bar people who were not affiliated with UCSC from entering the campus. I guess we had to give notice and all that stuff, but we did what we needed to do. We also put restrictions on the ability of students to have visitors staying in their dorm rooms during this period. So that was how we tried to deal with it. We also did a lot of parking enforcement. We found a lot of people parked their cars on the Empire Grade and other places. So we did a lot of that. You know, getting a ticket at least helps as a deterrent. But the way I described it is, we were doing our part for physical fitness of dope smokers because most of them had to walk up to the campus from the base.

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Blumenthal: That was just fine with me. So, they were fitter. And we tried other things. Felicia McGinty, when she was vice chancellor of student affairs, had an idea which I thought initially was a terrible idea, but we did it anyway, and I think it turned out to be a good one. She wrote to the parents of students telling them about 4/20 and encouraging them to suggest that their students not participate. Interestingly enough, we got only positive feedback from Felicia's letter. I expected there to be a lot of negative blowback, but there wasn't.

Reti: From the parents who are worried.

Blumenthal: Yeah. We also had campus warning messages. We always had to make clear, this is not a sanctioned event. And, of course, my worry was the dangers of some students overdosing. I just might add, you can overdose on marijuana. We've had, over the years, several students die from marijuana overdoses, usually when they eat it, rather than smoke it. I remember a case a couple of years ago, of some students who baked brownies and they used marijuana-laced butter to make the brownies. I think they said if the recipe said a cup of butter, maybe two cups would be better. And you can overdose on THC. So that's happened periodically.

So I was worried about overdosing, and I was worried about accidents. A whole bunch of high people driving on campus was not something I contemplated happily. And of course we did a lot of ticketing. We also imposed the rule: no food concessions. We didn't want this to be a long-lasting thing, so we wouldn't let anyone set up loudspeakers. So that was another way of limiting it. Later, our approach changed. We got rid of the kiosks, so saying you couldn't come on campus didn't seem viable. But we decided to go with a heavy police presence at the base of campus, at both the entrances, and police showed up in force with occasional stops of cars. And what we found was, the police made several arrests for things

like outstanding warrants of people in their cars. They also found guns and knives that were confiscated prior to 4/20. Of course, that worried me all the more. If we're going to see guns and knives, and that's referring to the ones that they found, how many didn't they find? But I guess if you've got drugs of any sort and people are selling it, there's likely to be instruments of destruction.

So in a sense, I prayed for the legalization of marijuana, not so much on the policy grounds, but in the hope that this would relieve the campus from having to have this celebration every year. And in fact, the numbers have gone down since legalization. I'm not sure how much longer it will last. But who knows?

And again, I said before I was really appalled by the number of babies that were at this. I actually wanted to go in person and watch it, but I was strongly dissuaded, and I followed that advice to keep from doing so. Because the last thing I wanted was a picture of the chancellor—

Reti: Right. Yeah. And was there concern about fire? Wildfire?

Blumenthal: Oh, I'm sure there was as well, yes.

Reti: Yeah. Because we're talking about a dry meadow in the woods, essentially.

Blumenthal: Look, we thought of everything. I remember one year I suggested that we get some manure and spread it on the meadow.

Reti: (laughs) I'm resisting making really bad puns.

Blumenthal: (laughs) But I, in fact, was dissuaded from that because the argument was made that they would just get mad and go somewhere else.

Reti: Somewhere else on campus.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So that was 4/20.

Reti: Okay. All right, George.

Blumenthal: Sorry, I don't have any super-duper stories.

Reti: No, it's important, though. I certainly know when I interviewed Jim Burns, he told me how much time he spent having to deal with 4/20. It was a major part of campus history in the last fifteen years or so.

Blumenthal: It's one of those things you put up with.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: All right. So a little bit about campus blockades. So access to the campus has been stopped on a number of occasions. It's one of the consequences of having only two entrances to campus.

Reti: Is that usual for campuses?

Blumenthal: To have only two entrances?

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: No.

Reti: I've been here my whole life, so I haven't seen that many other campuses.

Blumenthal: So, you can walk onto the Berkeley campus from any of twenty different places. Same for UCLA. Same for San Diego. I think Santa Barbara has somewhat more limited access, so Santa Barbara has some similarities to us. But they don't have the history of activism that we do.

So it's one of our crosses to bear that we only have two entrances. Usually when the campus has been blocked, or access to campus has been blocked, it's because of strikes. And lord knows, we've had a lot of strikes over the years. Generally speaking, the workers, or the union members who are picketing, are more cooperative. They may try to cross the street slowly or even block the street, but they'll respond to the police when they tell them to move on.

The real issue for us over the years has been students. The students really, sometimes definitively want to block the campus access. There were also blockades, for example, when tuition went up and the students decided to block access to the campus. There have been a number of reasons why students have wanted to block access. Usually it's been tuition or union contracts, but there may have been a few other issues in there as well. We try to be prepared when we think that this might happen, and I tried to keep the campus open, certainly during my early years here, fairly successfully at first, and then less successfully in more recent years. There was one principle I tried to maintain, which was that we always had to keep one entrance open. My reasoning was not very deep here. There are simply times when there are emergencies and people need to get on or off campus. There are times when people get desperate, for example, if they have to pick up their children or something. I really wanted to avoid road rage and anger. So to keep one entrance open was a great policy as long as we could do it. Eventually, we couldn't. And as I said, if there were things like medical emergencies, I'm not sure what would have happened. The students always said, "Well, we'll serve as the gatekeepers, and we'll let emergency vehicles through." But I don't think that they're trustworthy gatekeepers, and not all emergencies have emergency vehicles.

Reti: Right. Someone could just have kid in the car sick, trying to get from Family Student Housing to the hospital.

Blumenthal: I think it is the height of egocentrism to believe that you could be the gatekeeper of the campus, and that you can keep straight all the different needs that people have on the campus, while at the same time you're blocking the rights of campus population to be able to enter and get the education that they've paid for. So, in any event, I worried about that. I worried about road rage. We actually had a couple of incidents of road rage where somebody who came upon the campus blockade got really angry and tried to run over people. That can happen, too.

So we developed techniques for keeping the campus open. And then the protestors developed new techniques. So instead of blocking the entrances, they learned that they could block partway up the hill on the campus, and impede traffic that way and effectively block the campus. So there was a little bit of a game of point/counterpoint to this as it went on. This went on for a long time and it's continued certainly throughout my thirteen years as chancellor.

We have fundamental logistical problems. Just to point out that, first of all, people do live on campus. We have, not just students living on campus in their dorms, but we also have faculty and staff living on campus. And any time there was a closure, I would get lots of complaints from people who lived on campus that their access to and from campus was limited. And of course, if we had police there, I'd get lots of complaints that we were running a police state. It just went on and on and on. Everybody was complaining.

Another logistical problem was food. The food that we have on hand normally for students in the residence halls is really quite limited because we depend on daily deliveries. So when there's a strike or a campus closure, we're not getting deliveries, and therefore, things got tighter. That's why they served sometimes peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. And then we didn't have the staff to serve the foods because if the campus is closed, our

staff can't come up to work, and therefore they can't prepare the food or serve the food. And there's issues of medical staff. There're still 9,000 students living on campus and some of them get sick, but the medical center staff can't get to work, not without walking up. Because no buses would come up. And that was the other issue. No buses come up to campus and cross a picket line.

Reti: Yes. And the shuttles usually aren't running either.

Blumenthal: Often they're not running. Lately we've really tried to keep the shuttles running, partly for ADA purposes, for students who have disabilities, but partly just to make sure that we're shuttling people as much as we possibly can. My assistant, Margaret, drove a shuttle during one of the demonstrations. People were very, very grateful that she was doing that. I'm not sure she told them what office she worked in.

Reti: (laughs) Probably not.

Blumenthal: And then there's this nasty question about what do you do about classes? Do we cancel them? Do we keep them going? It's a difficult, difficult question. The other question is, does the campus close? Do we close the campus or not? Those are hard, hard questions. The key thing about classes is we really need to make that call early. Typically, if there's going to be a strike, we'll let people know beforehand, so they know that they should check the webpage before they come in. What we realized is that it's really important, because that's an academic issue, to include the leadership of the Academic Senate in making that decision. We tend to have calls early in the morning, like 5:00 AM or 5:30, and at the start of every strike we try to include members of the Academic Senate so that they can have input into that decision. We can't delay that decision too long and it's always a difficult decision to make, whether to close the campus or to cancel classes. I think the decision is ultimately mine, but I really want to be informed by the senate.

Reti: Mm-hmm. Because oftentimes, the campus does not end up being blocked, and so everything could continue. But you never know whether it's going to be or not.

Blumenthal: Yeah. We never know whether the most activist demonstrators are early risers or not. Whether they get there early in the morning when we start to set up, or whether or not they're going to come along later and actually close the campus. It's a tough call. So I think we've done well sometimes, and I think we have not done well sometimes, in terms of how we've handled campus closures. I wish I could tell you that we were perfect, but we just aren't. We do the best we can under very, very adverse circumstances.

And of course, as I'm sure you've heard from Jim Burns, communication is really important. So even if we start at 5:00 AM, we start to put out communications to the campus. We put stuff up on the website. And we do that with updates so that people can stay attuned to the latest—what road is the least congested road to take to campus, for example.

Reti: Yes. I've certainly appreciated those messages as a staff person.

Blumenthal: But that's kind of what we can do in terms of communications. And then there's the police. This has been a frustrating aspect of all of these issues. Because most of the campus closures are due to systemwide issues—either strikes for labor reasons, or demonstrations based upon tuition or systemwide policy. I can't think of a single issue that caused a campus closure due to a local issue, offhand, that I can remember. ⁴³³

Reti: Yeah, I can't, either.

Blumenthal: They're always fundamentally systemwide issues. Now we realize, or I realized soon into my chancellorship that it's a bad idea to use police, other than police trained to deal with students, and as a result, we're very reluctant to use local mutual aid

if we need an enhanced police presence. Our preferred method to get that is to outreach to the other campuses who have much larger police forces and get them to loan us some of their police. And then we can put together a significantly-sized police operation. There's agreement that when that happens the new police are under the orders of the local chief. Again, very sensible things. But what's not sensible, what doesn't make this work, or makes this not work is the fact that when it's a systemwide strike or a systemwide demonstration, then the other campuses are reluctant to release their police to a campus like Santa Cruz.

So we can't get the police we need, then, to keep the campus open, which is one of the reasons we were unsuccessful so many times at keeping the campus open. That is now changing. We may need 100 police officers to feel that we can do what we need to do to keep the campus open. Nader Oweis, our chief of police, has been training both CSU police and California Highway Patrol to deal with student demonstrations. That training has made a huge difference because we can now fairly regularly get enough police to be able to effectively keep the campus open.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: But ultimately, it's all constituencies who have to kick in and recognize the importance of keeping the campus open.

Reti: Right. So some of that training would maybe be about free speech issues or things like that?

Blumenthal: Yes, of course. But also issues of how to make an arrest of a student, which is not necessarily how you'd make an arrest of a bank robber.

Reti: Right. Yeah. You'd certainly hope.

Blumenthal: So, the next topic is Kerr Hall [protest number] two. Not one of my happier moments. This was a couple of years ago. During the course of that year, I had been meeting on a monthly basis with Black Student Association representatives. I actually had thought we were doing fairly well communicating and hearing both sides of issues. And meanwhile, there was this other group whose name now escapes me—it was co-chaired by Michelle Whittingham—looking at issues for black students. They had made a number of recommendations, including recommendations to hire a counselor at the Student Health Center with expertise in issues facing black students and to hire a recruiter, etcetera. They had made those recommendations and I had accepted those recommendations. We weren't moving fast, because it isn't always easy to recruit those people with that expertise, but we were certainly moving on it. So when the occupation of Kerr Hall happened, it was a complete surprise to me.

Reti: Wow. Really? So there was no, “We need these things, or else we're going to occupy Kerr Hall” moment.

Blumenthal: There was no formal warning. No. So they occupied Kerr Hall. It was really awkward in a number of regards. There was, for example, an anti-Semitic incident at the Graduate Commons with a student when they were marching over to Kerr. Some Jewish students were tabling about something having to do with Israel and somebody knocked over their table. That was really unfortunate, but I would emphasize just because that happened doesn't mean that it is the responsibility of all of the black students who demonstrated.

So the students came in. They were very peaceful. They occupied the building. They really didn't do much damage, I will say for them, unlike the previous Kerr Hall occupation. They stayed for a couple of days. I agreed to negotiate with them. They, of course, handed

me their non-negotiable list of demands. (Reti laughs) I didn't have a problem agreeing to some of their demands, like, for example, reestablishing the lounge in Rosa Parks House at Stevenson College. Or repainting it to a different color that they wanted. I didn't care about that. That was fine with me. There were some things, like their demand for an immediate Black studies major, that was something that we were ever going to be able to do without action of the Academic Senate.

So I did agree to some of their demands. I was uncomfortable—very uncomfortable with the notion—that those things I could agree with would be a quid pro quo for them leaving Kerr Hall. I didn't want to be in the position of doing quid pro quos. But that's how everybody interpreted it.

And then when we finally got to some kind of agreement, they agreed to meet with me, or at least the leadership of their group agreed to meet with me. We even agreed on a site which I think was over in Thimann, or someplace like that. It was all very awkward because at the last minute, they wanted to change it to the courtyard of Kerr Hall. And I refused. The reason I refused was because I didn't want a public spectacle. And of course they characterized, really mischaracterized my motives, as being afraid to be out there. which couldn't be further from the truth. The truth was, I didn't want a spectacle and I was unwilling to participate in one.

Apparently during the demonstration, at the end of this occupation, somebody in their group pushed a reporter down from the *Sentinel*. Don Miller never fails to remind me of that as being antithetical to a free press. Of course, he's right. On the other hand, there's nothing I can do about it. But I did not feel that my response to this incident was appropriate, at the end of the day. I was reluctant to send in the police and eject a bunch

of black students from Kerr Hall. I admit that. I thought that that wasn't a good image. I think they knew that. And they knew I knew that. I didn't want to do it.

On the other hand, in thinking about it afterwards I realized that it was not a good policy, to give in at that level. So I announced that there was a new policy on occupations and that henceforth, for occupations of Kerr Hall, there would be no negotiations and we'd send in the police as soon as we can. That's just going to be it, period. I said, "You don't have to believe me. You can argue I didn't do this, and why would I start doing it now?" But I wasn't prepared to think any more about it. That was my new policy. I announced it very publicly and let people do with it as they will. Thank God, with four more days left, we haven't had another occupation. I can't swear to you it was my new policy that did it. I know that lots of groups have wanted to occupy Kerr Hall. I know that when the black students occupied Kerr Hall, I found out later that there was another group—the anti-greenhouse gas investment group, who wanted to occupy Kerr Hall. I guess my reaction to that is, you're going to have to take a number.

Reti: (laughs) You've got reservations for occupations, right?

Blumenthal: Yeah, that's right. We should have a reservation system for occupying Kerr Hall. But in any event, I did announce that new policy, and that's what we've stuck with. What the future is from here on out is up to Cindy Larive, not me.

I will say another thing and that is, after the first occupation of Kerr Hall, I was rather proud of the way that we dealt with the issues of staff concerns. The staff didn't feel safe and I tried to deal with that in as caring and compassionate a way as I could. After the second Kerr Hall occupation, I don't think I handled that as well, by any means. A lot of staff were upset in this building. They were upset because we didn't have good procedures and staffing in place to deal with sudden occupations. We had, to be blunt, grown soft

having so many years elapse between occupations. So not everyone had their assignments. The policies weren't as clear. We just didn't do as good a job as we should have preparing for an occupation.

Secondly, I think that the feeling among staff was that we, in the administration in general, and me in particular, weren't empathetic sufficiently with fears that the staff had as a result of that occupation. Of course, it's a difficult tightrope here because I was trying to be sympathetic of the idea of an occupation by angry students, and at the same time be empathetic with the concerns and anger of the staff towards those students. Some staff felt that we should have taken a harder line against the students, but I really didn't want us to go down that pathway.

In any event, we did make some changes in the building. We made some changes in policy and in training. So we did respond to those concerns. I don't think we responded as much, or as well as some of the staff members in this building would have liked. And frankly, I might even agree with them that maybe we should have done more beforehand in particular. So overall, the Kerr Hall 2 incident is not a very happy incident, from my perspective. It was, in many ways, a lose/lose set of incidents.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: I've got to talk to you about the ugly as well as the good.

Reti: Yeah. For sure.

Privilege and Tenure Cases

Blumenthal: P&T cases. Well, Privilege and Tenure is a committee of the senate that deals with faculty grievances and with faculty discipline. Thank God, as chancellor, I haven't had huge numbers of cases that have come my way, but we've had some. The first

principle that I've tried to stick with is that I've always, at least so far, agreed with the recommendations of a Privilege and Tenure hearing committee. I'll say more about that later, but part of that is just because I chaired P&T, and I chaired hearings, and I know how hard the faculty work to be fair. So I feel a real obligation to agree, if I can.

It's now university policy, at least on Title IX cases, but it's been my policy from the beginning that I want to be informed when a case is brought against a faculty member. My reasoning is that I don't want to be embarrassed. But the process is such that, roughly speaking, if there's a discipline case, for example—the case is brought to the EVC, who then takes it to a charges committee of faculty. They look at the evidence and decide whether there's probable cause or not that there was a violation of the faculty code of conduct. The only way you can be disciplined is to violate the faculty code of conduct. And if there is such a violation, then the EVC will issue a formal letter of complaint and propose a discipline as a result. The faculty member can accept the discipline, or ask for a hearing before Privilege and Tenure, an evidentiary hearing. And if the faculty member asks for the hearing and does a hearing, then the committee meets and makes a recommendation to me as chancellor that I have to then decide.

In the case of a grievance, a grievance would go directly from a faculty member to the Privilege and Tenure committee alleging that somehow the university had violated his or her rights and privileges. If they found that there was prima facie evidence that those rights had been violated, they then could hold a hearing, and as a result of that hearing make a recommendation to the chancellor. So both types of cases would go to Privilege and Tenure.

For obvious reasons of confidentiality, I really don't want to discuss the details of any of the disciplinary or grievance cases that I had to deal with as chancellor. But some of the cases did raise interesting issues or policy issues that are worth mentioning.

The first disciplinary case that I had to sign off on involved violation of the romantic relationship section of the Faculty Code of Conduct. I had managed the passage of those rules by the systemwide senate about ten years earlier. Let me remind you that those rules basically preclude a faculty member from engaging in a sexual or romantic relationship with someone who is a student in their class or who is under their supervision, or who might reasonably be expected to be a future student in their class. It was actually interesting and somewhat disheartening to find allegations of this rule's violation at UCSC.

Another case I had to deal with had to do with faculty incompetence, again, a policy that I had a hand in writing for the UC system. At my insistence, the process is a two-year process. The first year's process is like a personnel review. It's a lot like somebody going up for promotion. You have to do a full review of their academic case, and then the second part of it is a Privilege and Tenure hearing. Seeing the process in action on my own campus once again convinced me that it is a wise process since it provides enough time to convince a faculty member who may have lost a few steps intellectually that the wisest course is to retire. In fact, systemwide, I believe only one or two cases have ever gone through to a final regental determination.

While I did have to deal with a fair number of disciplinary cases over the years, only one grievance case actually went through an entire privilege and tenure hearing and came to my desk for a decision. And it was a difficult decision for me. After a hearing, P&T decided that it was a legitimate grievance and recommended the mitigation by the university that

the grievant had requested. Normally, I would just automatically follow the advice I gave years earlier to M.R.C. and just agree with the Privilege and Tenure recommendation. In this case, however, it was clear that doing so would significantly harm an academic unit on campus. So I struggled a bit with this and decided to meet with the chair of P&T to talk this through. He convinced me that the P&T position was the principled position to take, and ultimately I chose that principled position even though it was somewhat harmful. I guess I felt that the best long term benefit to the university would be to remain true to principles.

During my last couple of years, the campus had to deal with two separate disciplinary matter involving faculty allegedly engaged in sexual harassment and sexual violence. Both of these cases involved a lot of press coverage as these cases were progressing. Certainly the survivors have every right to publicly discuss their experiences in these matters. But until these disciplinary matters are resolved, the university really cannot comment on them, which some members of our community interpret as either inaction or insufficient action.

One real misconception that's out there is that if a faculty member facing serious charges resigns before the process is completed, then the university failed to bring justice by "allowing" the resignation. In reality, anyone can resign from their position at any time from the university. They don't need my permission to resign. But it is true that sometimes those facing possible dismissal from the university choose to resign rather than face the sanction and disgrace of dismissal.

These two disciplinary cases raised two other interesting issues. One issue concerns the involuntary leave policy that I myself had written for the university fifteen years ago.

The other issue arose a few weeks ago when I met with some graduate students who complained to me that I had an accused faculty member on mandatory leave *with* salary. The question they posed was how could somebody who had done something so egregious be allowed to remain on the taxpayer's dole, so to speak. My response is that this is a person who had tenure at the university and deserves some level of due process. And to find that somebody is guilty prior to a formal hearing on the subject seemed to me fundamentally wrong, if you do believe in due process. And so I said, that's why I thought it was the appropriate thing to leave him on salary while the case progressed.

The students disagreed with that, so we had an interesting exchange back and forth. But then they raised an interesting question for me, which certainly caused me to ponder. I think I know the answer now, but it caught me a little bit off-guard. What they said to me was: okay, while they disagree with me about due process, they could understand what I was saying. They said, "On the other hand, if you make a finding that this individual is guilty and deserves to be fired, you're going to send it over to the president and then to the regents. But once you've made that determination, the faculty member has had due process. And therefore, why shouldn't that person then go onto leave without salary? Because due process has already occurred. You've already made your determination as chancellor that the person is guilty."

I thought that was an extremely interesting question. On the one hand, they have a point. I would have made that determination of guilt. On the other hand, I don't have the authority of final disposition in a case of firing a tenured faculty member. That decision lives with the regents. Were I to act to take away the salary of someone prior to that person going before the regents—and I admit to you, it might take three; it might even take four or five months for the case to actually get to the regents because regents' agenda gets set way in advance and the president has to act first. So there is some timeframe there. So the

students are right. There's a timeframe there, and I will have already made a decision in the case. But I think that for a chancellor to take a decision out of the hands of the regents is playing with fire, and probably inappropriate, given the fact that there's a process that's ongoing. So while I thought it was a really good question, and I thought they were very articulate in arguing their point, at the end of the day I didn't agree.

Reti: Right. So part of the due process is that the case needs to go all the way, or can go all the way to the regents. Ultimately, due process would not have been served if the regents were not involved in that decision.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Because the chancellor doesn't have the authority.

Blumenthal: Yes. I mean, sometimes if somebody's out on bail after they've been accused of committing a crime, when they're convicted of the crime and given a prison sentence—in the criminal justice system, if they are still undergoing appeals and don't pose an imminent threat to society, they're usually left out on bail until their appeals are exhausted.

Reti: Right. But they're not getting paid. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Okay, okay. Fair enough.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: Maybe that's a bad analogy. I'll acknowledge that.

Reti: Okay. Well, and there's such a degree of protection for faculty. I can't imagine that a staff person in a similar situation at UC would have that level of protection.

Blumenthal: No, it wouldn't have. I probably told you about the case that came to the regents that I intervened on years earlier that involved a faculty member. And the regents asked exactly that question: what about staff?

When I was the faculty representative to the regents, the way it worked was the two faculty representatives split all the committees, so each did half of the committees. I was very fortunate that I was not on the audit committee. I didn't want to be on the audit committee.

So when the audit committee met, I could have stayed in the room, but I usually just left. That was a good time to use the restroom, go get some coffee, chat with people, maybe have lunch, whatever, while the audit committee was meeting. But one meeting, early on in my first year as faculty representative, I happened to stay. I don't know why. Partly because it was a case that was a serious case of research misconduct against a faculty member, and I wanted to hear a little bit more about it. Ralph Cicerone,⁴³⁴ who was then the chancellor at UC Irvine, was explaining the case. As near as I could tell, the case was a faculty member at Irvine who had two very large grants to do two big projects, which is perfectly legitimate. But they were paying for one of the projects out of the wrong grant and they weren't bothering to keep the grant money applied to the projects for which the grant money was appropriated. So apparently these are two different grants in somewhat different areas. I might just add, when I had two grants, they were usually so closely related that I could legitimately charge certain things to either one of the grants. But sometimes you get grants that are on very different projects and then you have to be scrupulously careful to make sure that you're charging the right thing to the right grant.

Anyway, this person had been not careful in a big way, and had been caught. This issue had come up apparently in an audit or something, so it was a really big deal before the

regent's audit committee. And what the campus had done, quite reasonably and legitimately, had been to remove from this faculty member her right to be the principal investigator on the grants. And let me remind you that research grants are given not to a principal investigator; they're given to the university, which has responsibility for them. So they had removed her from the grants and removed her right to hold grants. Removal of the right to be the PI on a grant is not a discipline. It's not something that falls under the faculty code of conduct. It is an administrative action. Faculty members don't have an intrinsic right to be principal investigators. It might be grievable if they're removed, but it isn't a fundamental right in the sense of the faculty code of conduct.

Anyway, a couple of the regents went ballistic at this meeting and said, "Why hasn't this faculty member been fired?" They were literally ballistic. The argument was made, any staff member doing something like this would be fired in a flash.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So at that point, I intervened in the discussion and pointed out that this behavior might have violated the faculty code of conduct—malfeasance, financial malfeasance with grants—but that there's a process. To actually fire a faculty member requires bringing formal charges and having a hearing on those charges before a senate committee. That led to why are we treating faculty so much different, giving them so many protections that we don't give to staff? My response to that was well, there are actually reasons for that. Because of academic freedom, this is a way to ensure that faculty cannot be arbitrarily punished for reviews or for actions that fall within the realm of their freedom of expression as faculty members. I think the chancellor, Cicerone, was very grateful to me for that. I probably understood these rules far better than he did, and maybe better than anyone in the room at the time. It was fine. I was happy to help out.

So it turns out the issue came back to the next audit committee meeting. I didn't I know that, because I didn't read their agendas. I'm out in the hall, schmoozing away with people. (laughter) and all of a sudden, somebody came in from this regents-only session and grabs me and says, "They can't proceed without you." (laughs)

Reti: Oh my goodness!

Blumenthal: Turns out Cicerone really didn't want to have that discussion without me in the room because I kind of had steered it into the right direction the previous time. So we had that discussion again. And I was kind of amazed because when, ultimately, they later on did bring charges against this faculty member, he actually sent them to me before they actually distributed them to the faculty member. I mean in a way, I shouldn't have been brought into that loop, but—

Reti: Okay, great. Thank you. That helps. I think we talked about this a little bit before, but not in as much depth and not with this context. Circling around makes it clear.

Blumenthal: Yeah. These things tend to come back and haunt you.

Reti: I recall something about being out in the hall eating a donut or something. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yeah. I might have the food group mixed up.

Reti: (laughs) Or a bagel. I don't know what it was. Something like that. But yeah. Thank you, George.

So let me now turn to a very painful experience, when charges were brought against me.

Reti: Oh my goodness. Okay.

Blumenthal: Looking back, it's kind of amusing. But it wasn't amusing at the time. A couple of years ago, this happened at a staff advisory board forum—we have these lunchtime forums once a quarter. And I must say, I'm usually pretty relaxed at these forums because I have a very good relationship with the staff. So I don't regard these as high-tension affairs. I was answering a question—I don't even remember exactly what the question was; it may have been about parking. But I told the old Clark Kerr story about how a successful university president is one who supplies football for the alumni, sex for the students, and parking for the faculty. That's a direct quote from Clark Kerr. And as a result of my having made that comment, a Title IX complaint was filed against me for creating a climate—

So I heard about the complaint. Of course, I wasn't told who filed it, which is perfectly fine. But it's really—you know, I'm a chancellor. I shouldn't be engaged in sexual harassment. I was horrified that that had happened. I did talk with campus counsel Loreña Penaloza about this, which was, for me, very, very helpful. Loreña—and I understood this, and Lorena understood this—she wasn't representing me, she was representing the university. But she did give me some advice, which made me very uncomfortable, but I took the advice. Her point was that since this involved the chancellor, the complaint would be investigated at the Office of the President. And that in the natural course of affairs, the president would be informed of it. So she advised me to proactively call Janet and tell her, which I did do. And you can only imagine how stressed I was at the time because this also happened not too long after the SurveyGate fiasco.

Reti: Oh, no. (laughs) I was afraid you were going to say that.

Blumenthal: Janet and my relationship—I didn't feel all that comfortable with her at that moment in time. But I did call her. And I want to give her credit. She handled it

extremely well. She was grateful that I had informed her. When I told her what I had done, she thought it was hilarious. I liked the fact that she thought it was hilarious that this would happen. But on the other hand, for me this was very uncomfortable.

Then they did an investigation. The good news was that there was a recording of the whole event, so the investigators could listen to the whole thing. Maybe it was even visual as well. I don't know. But there was certainly a recording. And they made a finding that there was no prima facie case. There was no evidence. They made a null finding. So the matter disappeared. But still, it really upset me. I realized I probably should not have told that story. On a scale of egregiousness, I don't think it rises that high, but it probably would have been better not to have done it.

Reti: And what Kerr meant was provide a place where students could basically have relationships with each other, not that it would be provided for faculty.

Blumenthal: Right, of course. Oh, good lord, no. No, no, no. Of course not.

Reti: This was just about campus life and what you did at college.

Blumenthal: Yes. Exactly.

Reti: In a totally different time period, of course.

Blumenthal: Exactly.

Reti: Just to be clear.

Blumenthal: It was a different time period. That was his intention. Of course. And he was just trying to be funny.

Reti: Right, right. Funny at that time. Right.

Blumenthal: In any event, that was my experience with the system.

Reti: Okay. Yeah.

Blumenthal: All right. What's next?

Reti: Systemwide task force?

Blumenthal: So Janet formed a systemwide task force on sexual violence, sexual assault. In fact, she formed several task forces. The first task force, which started around 2014 or so, basically looked at the student against student sexual harassment issue. It was a task force that met over the course of the year and made a whole pile of recommendations. They changed the process considerably as a result.

And with the success of that task force, she decided to set up another task force on sexual harassment as perpetrated by faculty. She appointed me on that task force. I might have even volunteered because at that point, this was around the time we were dealing with one of the horrible disciplinary cases on campus, so I was already concerned about the mandatory leave rule that I had written, that I thought had to be modified. There were a number of issues that were percolating at the time about faculty. There were issues about the speed with which the process operates for faculty. There were issues about the statute of limitations. Again, I'm responsible. I'm the one who wrote that original statute of limitations, although we modified it later. But it basically said that if a case isn't brought within three years of when the university knew, or should have known about a case or infraction, then the statute would run out. And the newer "should have known" was interpreted as a responsible official should have known. There's been lots of controversy about that because some old cases did arise and it raised the question. So that was going

And then there was the issue of the involuntary leave issue which I really wanted to correct.

Reti: Involuntary leave?

Blumenthal: Leave with salary.

Reti: Ah. Okay.

Blumenthal: I wrote the policy. So when this group started meeting, I did a couple of things. I defended the principle of the statute of limitations, even if I wasn't prepared to defend the specific wording. I don't think it got changed, at the end of the day. I think it got clarified. And on the issue of involuntary leave, since I'd written the policy, I decided that I would write a revised policy. The revised policy provided a much longer potential timeframe, but preserved a faculty member's right to grieve if they were inappropriately placed on involuntary leave. The original policy I had written called for formal charges to be brought within two weeks of the imposition of involuntary leave. The cases I saw as chancellor convinced me that this timeframe was way too short. A chancellor should not hesitate to place a faculty member on leave if they represent a credible threat to people on the campus. On the other hand, sometimes it just takes longer than a couple of weeks to go through the very formal process of filing official charges. So I drafted a more workable policy.

And somewhat, to my surprise, that policy which I wrote—I decided I would draft the best possible policy I could, now that I'd seen both sides of the issue – was adopted. I thought it was going to be very controversial. And ironically, it generated remarkably little controversy. It was accepted by the students, because they wanted to see more involuntary leave. It was accepted by the senate quite easily. I mean, there may have been some

dissenting voices along the way. But by and large, the senate accepted this. So I think times had just changed.

Reti: Interesting. Because this is just before the #MeToo movement really hit.

Blumenthal: Oh, no, the #MeToo movement was already going.

So again, the policy which I drafted essentially became the policy. They may have changed a word or something, I don't know. But it was drafted with relatively little difficulty. And then it went to the regents and it was approved by the regents. The faculty code of conduct has traditionally gone to the regents. I'm sorry, let me back up a little bit. The faculty code of conduct lives in something called APM015. Academic Personnel Manual 015. Normally, the president owns the Academic Personnel Manual. That is, the ultimate authority to make changes in that manual reside with the president. But traditionally, that one section, AMP015, is approved by the regents, and is approved by the assembly of the Academic Senate, which is the legislative body.

Reti: I see.

Blumenthal: It has never been the case that a change in the code of conduct has occurred without the approval of the regents and the Academic Assembly. I would hate to ever get to a point where we tested whether or not something else could happen. (laughs) I think it's appropriate that there be that agreement.

Reti: Yes. I can see that.

Blumenthal: One of the other things Janet wanted to do as a part of this was put in place a so-called peer review committee. Let me just say a word or two about that. You may recall that there were three very, very egregious sexual harassment cases at Berkeley,

which Berkeley managed to completely mishandle. The first of those was the Geoff Marcy case. Geoff Marcy was a former student from Santa Cruz.⁴³⁵

Reti: Right. In astronomy.

Blumenthal: A famous astronomer. He probably would have been in line for a Nobel Prize, had this not happened. Geoff had a long history of sexual harassment of female students. And at the end of the day, Title IX cases were brought against him, and he was basically given a slap on the wrist at Berkeley through the disciplinary process, basically a censure, with the message ever do it again. There was national outrage over this. It was well known among all women astronomers that he was a predatory individual. So there was a huge outcry, the upshot of which was he was kind of—well he wasn't officially forced to resign—but he basically resigned because he had become a divisive and controversial figure on a national scale.

And then, not long after, there was the case of the law school dean, the dean of the Berkeley Law School, I don't remember the details, but he was basically accused of chasing his secretary around the desk. I don't remember if it was literal or figurative, but basically that was kind of what he was accused of. And again, Berkeley kind of gave him a pass. They gave him a slap on the wrist. They decreased his salary for some time and said, "Don't do it again." And there was outrage. Ultimately, they had to go back and fire him as dean, I think. Ultimately, they brought a discipline case against his faculty position as well. I think that he may have resigned before that was completed. I don't remember what happened to him, ultimately.

And then there was the case of their vice chancellor for research, who was accused of sexual harassment. He stepped down as vice chancellor of research and then the chancellor gave him another administrative position within the campus. I mean—I—it's

one thing to shoot yourself in the foot; it's another thing to aim at your foot before you shoot.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, God.

Blumenthal: So Berkeley did all of these things. And as a result, particularly of the last two, who were university administrators, Janet was irate. So she mandated a new policy—which was her authority to do—to institute a peer review committee which would review any settlement of a sexual harassment case involving a senior administrator on any campus. I think that was a good thing to do because in a sense, why should a chancellor—who is himself or herself a senior administrator—be the final decision maker without some input. So Janet put together a systemwide peer review committee that would review all cases of settlements involving sexual harassment in senior administrators.

Reti: Does that committee report to Janet?

Blumenthal: Yes. So after she started this task force that I was on, she loved this idea of a peer review committee. I actually approve of what she did. She decided that she wanted a peer review committee on every campus to review every possible settlement case. Her original proposal was to make it mandatory that they approve any settlement on campuses. I screamed bloody murder on that one, because I don't understand why somebody on my campus should have veto authority over what I do as chancellor.

Reti: I'm sorry, I lost you on that last point. Mandatory that they approve any settlement?

Blumenthal: That I agree to. So think about it. I would appoint a committee, but then imbue the power to that committee to veto a decision that I was prepared to make.

Reti: That doesn't make any sense. No, that's not really how committees work.

Blumenthal: Right, to me that doesn't make any sense, either. So eventually we talked her down from there. We did adopt the idea of a peer review committee, but with the authority to advise the chancellor on any settlement. I'm just fine with that. All of the campuses decided to do it differently from one another. On our campus, I met with the Privilege & Tenure Committee to discuss this and we all agreed that instead of forming a new committee, we would simply use the Charges Committee as the peer review committee. Because they would already be informed about charges, they would already be up to speed. So we would use them as sort of an arbiter of good taste in terms of what would be a reasonable settlement. So that's what we're doing at Santa Cruz. That was, I think, some of the main things that we did as part of that task force. We did other things as well.

Later, there was a state audit of Title IX cases on the campuses. It was one of the better audits emerging from Elaine Howle's office. As you've heard me say before, I do not hold the state auditor in high regard. I regard her as unprofessional in a number of regards. On the other hand, the audit of Title IX, while I certainly would quibble with parts of it, I thought that the audit made some good points. They made a point, which I had tried to make years earlier, that we needed to coordinate what is an appropriate response among the various campuses—that it doesn't make sense that the same crime would have very different responses on different campuses. She made that point and I completely agree with that. I think that's an issue we're trying to address and moving in that direction. But I think we're a ways away from fully addressing it.

Another issue she raised was the length of the privilege and tenure process. I want to call out the senate leadership at the time, who I think were Shane White and Robert May, because they met with her or her staff. They had a number of meetings with them and they basically talked them down from the original recommendations that they were going

to make about the privilege and tenure process. And instead, the recommendation was that Privilege & Tenure adopt explicit time scales that things had to be done by. That has since been done. The senate has adopted that. I really think Shane and Robert did a great job in getting that to a reasonable place. I think the original proposals were completely unreasonable.

And just sort of as an afterthought, I was very amused by this—at our last Council of Chancellors meeting in June of 2019, Janet announced that she wanted to form yet another task force to look more broadly at sexual harassment issues and Title IX issues. She thought it was going to be important to have a range of people on that task force, and she wanted two chancellors to volunteer. So everyone started to tie their shoe (Reti laughs) and what emerged immediately was a call of, “I think this would be perfect for George.”

Reti: Even though you were leaving.

Blumenthal: That was a joke.

Reti: Oh, okay. (laughs) I was going to say, what? For like a few weeks?

Blumenthal: Because I think they knew that if I were still chancellor, I would probably be on this.

Reti: Right. Of course. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Also, none of them wanted to do it. So that’s why it was perfect for George. All right, so that finishes that topic.

Reti: Okay.

Graduations

Blumenthal: So I want to talk a little bit about graduations. Over the years I've given a number of commencement addresses, actually, none before I became chancellor. But I've given a commencement address at UWM, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, as part of getting my honorary PhD. I've talked about that before. I gave one at Santa Monica City College, which was a lot of fun because Santa Monica City College sends more graduates to UC than any other community college in California. We get a lot of students from there. It's a very successful place.

And I've done two UCSC graduate graduations. Ironically, the first one I did was right after I became chancellor. And the second one I did was just a few weeks ago, just before my term as chancellor ended.

Reti: Uh-huh. Bookends.

Blumenthal: So they are bookends on my chancellorship. That's been kind of fun. I'm kind of proud of my graduation speeches. I think they were very good. I try to do them a little differently than most people do graduation speeches. And I try to keep them a little amusing, with some lessons, but not too preachy. And a little personal, too.

It's kind of funny. I have enjoyed our graduations. It's kind of weird. When I became chancellor, Maurene Catto, who was then my executive assistant, insisted that I get a cap and gown. So we went out and bought this fancy cap and gown that's wrinkle-free. And then they came and they fitted me. I felt as though I was a prima donna, you know? It just felt so weird to do that. But I'm glad we did because I've used that cap and gown a lot over the years, including at graduations and things elsewhere. And being wrinkle-free means I can pack it and actually wear it when I get off the plane. It really was a good investment.

Reti: Yeah. (laughs)

Blumenthal: But it is ironic to me that I enjoy these graduations. And the reason it's ironic is that I never went to graduations. I went to my high school graduation because everybody had to go to that. When I graduated from college, I did not attend the graduation. I didn't want to. It just seemed to me like a bunch of formal pomp and circumstance. And furthermore, my last college class was in summer school; I had to take that course in summer school, and so I didn't want to walk with the people graduating in June, even though I could have. And since I was graduating in three years, I really didn't know people in that graduating class. So, I had absolutely no interest in walking in graduation in college. At graduate school, I felt the same way. I was in San Diego. I finished my dissertation in January, so I would have had to come back to go to graduation. And for what? I mean, I just didn't see a point to doing it.

Reti: Your family.

Blumenthal: My mother at the time was living in New York City. And my sister was in New York City.

Reti: Yeah. It's a long way to come.

Blumenthal: So it would have been kind of crazy. But I really wasn't interested, in any event. I just wasn't interested in these formal affairs. Let me remind you, maybe I didn't tell you this—maybe I was too embarrassed to tell you this—but I got married wearing a sports jacket and sandals.

Reti: (laughs) You're not a formal kind of guy.

Blumenthal: I'm not a formal kind of guy. So that's why it kind of surprises me that I've come to enjoy graduations. But in part that's because it's not personal to me; it's personal to the students.

Reti: And you feel proud of them.

Blumenthal: I feel proud of them. I feel pleased to be a part of their experience. And I'm so pleased to see their joy, their great joy at graduating. To me, that's what's so enjoyable.

Reti: Sure, sure.

Blumenthal: And the families. And it is so weird how—you know, I cannot even begin to tell you when I go to graduations, how many people want to have their picture taken with me. I mean, it's so weird. I'm not a celebrity, right? But people want that. Now, part of it may be these fancy gowns that I have. (Reti laughs) But anyway, it is kind of fun. It's also exhausting. Every year, for the last thirteen years, I've attended seven or eight graduations on campus and occasionally a graduation elsewhere as well.

Reti: God, the sunburn factor alone would be bad. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Well, that is true. That is absolutely true. The graduations have varied from being cold, freezing cold outside, to being scorchingly hot.

I always attend the graduate graduation and I always attend, typically, five college graduations because we do our graduations here in a staggered way so that it's impossible to attend all ten college graduations. So typically, I will split those with the provost. So I do graduate graduation; I do five colleges; and then I usually do a few others. In recent years I did black graduation; I've done the engineering graduation several times, I've done the economics graduation. So sort of catch as catch can, I'll do some of the more

specialized graduations, but always five colleges and the graduate graduation, plus something.

Reti: That's amazing.

Blumenthal: And I will tell you, when graduation weekend is over, I am exhausted because I shake something like two or three thousand hands every graduation weekend, maybe even more, now that I come to think of it, probably closer to three thousand hands.

Reti: Oh my God. So you have sunburn and tendonitis. That's amazing.

Blumenthal: I always make sure that I've done some weightlifting before graduation.

Reti: Right. (laughs) Yeah, seriously.

Blumenthal: But the issue isn't strain. It's never been an issue having somebody squeeze my hand so hard that you can't—although some students will squeeze pretty hard. The biggest issue, the thing that I fear the most, is jewelry. Because a lot of students wear jewelry on their right hand, and a lot of that jewelry is sharp, even unintentionally. So imagine if you were a woman with an engagement ring, you know, a diamond ring. Imagine if that ring turned around and the diamond were on the inside. It could be quite sharp.

Reti: Yeah. Diamonds cut.

Blumenthal: That's right. But it doesn't have to be a diamond. Just an ordinary ring can have a sharp edge to it. And some students wear lots of jewelry on their hands. My fear has always been that we would break skin. I didn't want to be bleeding. (laughter) I also didn't want to get an infection or anything like that. I'm not a germaphobe, but—

Reti: But sure. Yeah.

Blumenthal: So that was the thing I always worried about the most.

But it was always interesting. I've had students be flashers onstage; I've had students walk up to me to shake my hand and then take a selfie. Every year there's a few, I call them refuseniks, who refuse to shake my hand because they're upset by something I did. I still offer them congratulations, even if they won't shake my hand. One year at a Kresge College graduation a student really did something very gross. He shook the hand of the provost, then walked over to me, spat on his hand and then offered to shake.

Reti: Yuck.

Blumenthal: Ben Carson was the provost and he wrote a very, very nasty letter to that student afterwards about how inappropriate that was.

I've had a bunch of students, particularly students who I know well, who might give me a hug. I don't hug people. I let them hug me, if you know what I mean.

Reti: Sure.

Blumenthal: I had many students over the years—almost all male—when they come up to me to shake my hand instead slap me on the rump. (laughter)

Reti: God!

Blumenthal: So anything can happen up there. But it's kind of interesting. And it's always exciting when I see students I know, students who I've had some kind of relationship with over the years. That's always so exciting when I see them. Sometimes they're even in the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program, or in the class I co-teach with Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz.

And there is something else I often try to do, and it's often an interesting intellectual exercise, but it's very difficult to do this well. Someone calls the students' names. So when they get to me, by the time they get to me, I try to say something, usually something like, "Congratulations to you, Jimmy," or whatever his or her name is. I try to use their name to more personalize it, which is an interesting exercise for three reasons. Sometimes it's hard to hear the name that's called out. Sometimes it's hard to hear. Not all readers of names do a good job, particularly on first names. It's often easier to hear the last name than the first name, especially if the first name is short. Secondly, a lot of students have names that have no familiarity to me. I mean, sometimes they're foreign students. Sometimes they're American students, but they just have names that—you know, it's not John and Mary.

Reti: Right. As we've had a more diverse campus.

Blumenthal: Yes. That's what you get from a more diverse campus.

And then the third difficulty is that in some colleges, they read the names so fast that, or there's so little time between students, that by the time the student has gotten to me, there's been two more names read. So I have to keep a running total of names in my head and scroll backwards, if you know what I mean, so that I can congratulate the name of the student who was read three students ago, or whatever it was.

Reti: That sounds like a nightmare to me. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Well, it's an interesting intellectual exercise.

Reti: It's a good memory preservation exercise.

Blumenthal: Well, it's kind of funny, because it's short-term memory that you're relying on. It's so easy to get confused. And sometimes I do it so well. I'll do twenty students in a

row and I'll keep this pattern going. And then somebody will do something. A student will trip, or something very unintentional will happen, and it will completely screw up my concentration, and I completely lose it. Then I can't use names for a while and I have to slow down. It's an interesting intellectual exercise.

But I want to say that I was so pleased that my last graduation that I did was Oakes College. It just seemed so fitting to me.

Reti: Oh. Oh, yeah.

Blumenthal: That was really quite meaningful to me. I only missed two college graduations, I think, in my thirteen years as chancellor. Both times were when my kids were graduating from high school. I felt I couldn't miss that. Both of them were valedictorians in high school, so—

Reti: Sure, of course, yeah.

Blumenthal: And that is graduation.

Reti: Okay.

Last Day as Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz

All right. So George, this is your last official day as chancellor of UCSC. It's an emotional time for everybody around here. We're sitting in here in your office. You're in the process of moving your belongings. It's a big transition. So I'm curious about how you feel today, and also what is in your future.

Blumenthal: Well, that's a really good question about how I feel today. First of all, I've been anticipating this day for the better part of a year, so it shouldn't be too much of a shock. I've also gone through a lot of going aways, and lasts. I've been really moved about

how many people have expressed their feelings about my departure and about my chancellorship. It's been so nice. And I've met with so many groups. It really warms my heart to know that.

But on my last day, I got up and I decided that there were only two things I could wear on my last day. I either had to wear a tuxedo or I had to wear shorts.

Reti: (laughs) Why? I get the shorts part, but what's the tuxedo part?

Blumenthal: Just to make it a special day.

Reti: Ah. I wasn't going to tell people you were wearing shorts, but since you're telling them. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So between the tuxedo and the shorts, it was an easy decision. And somewhat to my amazement as I walked out the door, and I saw my wife, Kelly, who would normally and frequently criticize what I'd put on that day, she was surprisingly okay with my wearing shorts on my last day. (laughter)

Reti: If I recall, you've been quoted in probably *City on a Hill* as saying one of the things that was hard for you about becoming chancellor was you had to give up wearing shorts.

Blumenthal: Mm-hmm.

Reti: So now you can return to that.

Blumenthal: Now I can return to my previous life in my previous sartorial splendor.
(Reti laughs)

So anyway, so I have a mixture of emotions. And it's really difficult. It's hard to keep them all straight. I feel very warm toward the people around here. I'm going to miss seeing the

people regularly. I know that I'll continue to see Margaret and others here, and we'll have lunch. Margaret and her husband and I and Kelly are going to have dinner soon, so we will be seeing each other. But I know I'm going to miss people.

And I have mixed feelings about the role and missing it. I'm going to miss it in many ways. My life is going to be structured in a very different way. I will definitely miss some of the joyous things I do as chancellor. I will miss a lot of the policy issues that come up as chancellor. But the truth is, I don't think I'm going to miss the job. I think the responsibility—I've done it long enough and I'm ready to move on. That's why I decided to retire. So those kinds of things are going through my head at the moment. And I'm really trying to be focused on what's next.

The Next Chapter

So let me talk about what's next in my life. First, the overarching message is I have completely failed my retirement—a total failure in that regard. And I think that's in my character, so that's not a total surprise. So I'll be doing a number of things. Roughly speaking, half-time I'm going to be on campus here in the astronomy department. I plan to engage in research. I'm hoping to do some work with Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz. He and I have co-taught before. I'll volunteer to do some teaching in astronomy and probably co-teach with him again. I'm happy to do that and maybe take a bigger role than I was able to do as chancellor. But to me, that's all volunteer stuff on campus. So I'm very much looking forward to doing that. I'll also be doing a new edition to one of my books.

Reti: And as far as your research, where the general area that you'll be working in?

Blumenthal: Still to be determined, but Enrico and I have talked about some projects having to do with gravitational radiation.

And then in addition to that, I will be taking a half-time position at Berkeley as the director of their Center for Studies in Higher Education.⁴³⁶ The center has been in existence for, I don't know, forty, fifty years. And it's quite well known, particularly internationally. It's better known internationally than it's known in California. The center was led for about ten years by Jud King after he retired as the provost of the university system. Then, interestingly enough, for one year the director of the center was a retired president of Smith College named Carol Christ, who after one year was tapped to take a senior administrative role, and then become chancellor at Berkeley. Since Carol left the position two years ago, it's been vacant. Well, I guess it's been done de facto by Henry Brady, the dean of the Goldman School of Public Policy. But Henry doesn't have the bandwidth to really do it, and he would be the first to admit that.

So I think coming in as a new director, there're some real things I want to do there. The center right now runs a summer program educating university administrators with a particular emphasis on diversity. They do a fantastic job. In fact, I'm going to participate in this summer's summer school. I have a role there. They have a number of research programs that they carry out. The center was the origin of the UCUES survey that UC does of all UC students. The center still runs the survey, and now does it for a number of other universities as well. There's a major project at the center to do quantitative historical data on higher education. And there's a large international program at the center with many international visitors. And then there is a speaker series. There's an annual Clark Kerr lecture, and then there's a speaker series on higher education issues throughout the year. In addition, the Center runs the Gardner seminar involving PhD students from a wide range of disciplines doing research on higher education.

So what I'd like to do is rekindle some of the connections between the center and the Berkeley campus—it's really quite isolated within the Berkeley campus—and to make

those connections; to make connections, again, to the Office of the President. There used to be a close relationship between the Office of the President and the Center, and I'd like to restart that. I'd like to also have more relationships with other campuses within the system. So those are my goals. I really want to make the place as vital and as interesting as possible.

At the same time, I have my own interests in public higher education policy, so I do want to do some writing in that. I might want to write a book. I might want to teach some classes in higher education policy.

Reti: Oh, that would be fabulous.

Blumenthal: So I think I'll have plenty to do there. In addition to that—

Reti: Oh, no! (laughs)

Blumenthal: In addition to that, Michael Brown, who's the provost of the university and an old friend, asked me if I would do some things for the provost office, which I agreed to do. But that's still to be determined.

And then, as though that isn't enough, I will serve on three nonprofit boards—I've resigned most of the boards that I've been on as chancellor—but I will continue on two of the boards and join a third. I will continue as the vice chair of the CARA board, which oversees the two Keck telescopes in Hawaii, Keck Observatory.

Reti: So you're going to continue in that role.

Blumenthal: I'll continue with that. I'm currently the vice chair, and I realize that by continuing for a couple more years, I'm probably obliging myself to continue for at least five years because I should serve as chair if I've been the vice chair throughout a term.

Reti: Oh, that's a long commitment.

Blumenthal: And who knows, maybe even beyond that. But I'm fine with doing that. I think it's an important service. In addition, I've served for two years on the stem cell board, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. I considered resigning from it.

Reti: So it's still okay for you to be on that board, even though you're not the chancellor?

Blumenthal: Well, I had some questions about that, so I did some checking with the general counsel for the stem cell board. I will be a chancellor emeritus, which confers some status. I asked them about it. I said I was perfectly okay stepping down. I had some discussions with former senator Art Torres, who is a very persuasive man, and a banana slug, I might add. Art convinced me to stay on, so I will stay on that board.

Then I was recently asked by the board of trustees at the American University of Armenia to join their board. The University of California has a very close relationship with the American University of Armenia. Basically when the Armenian university was started, the donor insisted upon a close relationship with a US university. So they chose UC. There's been a very close relationship since. The chair of the board of trustees currently is Larry Pitts and he's taken this very seriously. He's done a lot for the board. And Larry pointed out to me that if I would agree to join the board, I would represent a significant youth movement.

Reti: (laughs) Oh my God.

Blumenthal: I don't know why everyone smiles. Because other board members include Karl Pister, Jud King, and Bill Fraser. Bill Fraser was the former provost way before Jud King. Bill was a full professor at San Diego when I was a graduate student.

Reti: I know. So these are people in their nineties, essentially, right.

Blumenthal: Yes.

Reti: So you are a generation behind them.

Blumenthal: That's right. And I'm told that not all of them will fly long distances anymore to board meetings. So yeah, to some extent I do represent a youth movement. I'm looking forward to my first board meeting in LA in September. And I'm looking forward to going to Armenia. So I will still be active.

And I'm going to a conference in China, in Shanghai, in October. It was kind of ironic—I got an invitation from the organizers of this conference to be one of the main speakers at the conference. But it was sent to Chancellor George Blumenthal, so I felt morally obliged to write back and decline on the grounds that I would no longer be chancellor at Santa Cruz anymore. But I said I was still interested in the conference, and for future conferences keep me in mind since I will be the director of the center. So they wrote back and said, “Well, we'd be delighted to ask you as director of the center.”

Reti: (laughs) That position as director of the center seems so ideal for you, as someone with a deep interest in higher education,

Blumenthal: Yes. So that's the plan going forward.

Reti: Well, that's very exciting, to see all the things you're going to do.

Blumenthal: So I have something to go toward, not away from.

Reti: Oh, absolutely. And you still have tons of energy.

Blumenthal: I still have my health. That's the other thing. I wanted to retire as chancellor while I was healthy. Or the way I put it is, I didn't want to be carried out of here feet first. I think it's important. I think it's really important to not stay too long, whatever

too long means. I'm not sure that this was the perfect time, but it was certainly within the realm of the right time for me to go.

Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program

So I'd like to talk about a program I'm actually quite enamored of, and I'm quite proud of, although I didn't begin it. I think Karl Pister may have begun it, but certainly M.R.C. Greenwood kept it going. It's the Chancellor's Undergraduate Internship Program. I see it as a leadership program that develops our students to be leaders. I've certainly embraced it and expanded it. We now have fifty students in the CUIP program. The program involves fifty students who each have an internship somewhere on campus. It could be an academic internship. It could be an internship in a tutoring center. It could be an internship with SHOP. Every year we have two good neighbor interns who do outreach to the community of Santa Cruz. So it's internships all around campus doing a wide variety of things.

The students meet over the course of an entire year, while they're doing their internships. So they share experiences in their internships, but more than that, we arrange a series of lectures to them—or "lecture" is maybe too formal a word—interactions with senior administrators on campus. So I'll usually come in at the beginning of the year, talk about what the chancellor does. We'll talk about what are the big issues facing the campus and then let them ask questions to their heart's content. Then they bring in the various vice chancellors and some vice provosts, some of the college provosts, basically campus officials, to give them a broad range of understanding of how the campus works and what are the issues because a lot of students just don't have a clue of what we do in here.

So they learn about the university. They learn to ask questions about it. The goal is to have them understand how their internship working for a piece of the university really fits into a broader picture, but also to understand this broader picture.

I think it's a wonderful class. Students get a great experience. I always make it a point to meet with them at the end of the year. I usually host a breakfast or something. But they also do a presentation on their internships, which I try to participate in. It's been a great program. We've had some fantastic students over the years. They sometimes keep in touch with each other. But they learn a lot about leadership issues, and that's what I like about it. It's a very formal program that lets them learn about leadership. And in fact, I like it so much that when I announced my retirement and I was asked what fund I would encourage people to contribute to, we established a fellowship fund for the CUIP program, a scholarship fund, I should say.

Reti: Wonderful.

Blumenthal: So that raised a fair chunk of money for scholarships.

So that's one of my all-time favorite programs. Again, I wasn't the inventor, but I did expand it and I tried to make it more vibrant.

I loved it so much that we started a graduate CUIP program. Only it's not CUIP, because it's graduates. It's basically a graduate internship program. We structured it a little bit differently by taking graduate students and encouraging them as a part of their internship to do research on the campus, on an issue that's of concern to the campus. Some graduate student interns do research on some environmental issue that the campus is facing, or some species that might be inhabiting the campus. Others might do research on policy questions, or on other things that involve the campus. But they do need to be campus-related in one form or another. Then we get the interns together to share their results. So

it's a way of getting graduate students involved as well. Some of them do research that's closely related to their dissertation. For some, it's very different than their dissertation.

Reti: Well, I should say that Regional History was lucky enough to have one of your graduate interns working with us last year on the UCSC oral history anthology and the archival material that goes with it. It was a pleasure.

Blumenthal: Oh, that's great.

Reti: And approximately how many grad students are there in that program?

Blumenthal: Typically six to eight. It's much smaller, but I thought it was important to emulate a program that was so good for undergraduates. You know, we sometimes just ignore graduate students on this campus.

Reti: Yes, that is so true.

Reti: Okay. So today is July 18, 2019. This is Irene Reti and I am here with now Chancellor Emeritus George Blumenthal for our 39th interview in the oral history we're doing together. We're now in the first couple of weeks since George left office as chancellor. We have yet a few topics that we haven't covered, so we're continuing with the oral history on this July day. We're going to start by talking about academic freedom again in a different context than we did a few sessions ago.

Academic Freedom for Academic Staff

Blumenthal: Okay. Well, we did talk about academic freedom, primarily from the context of the changes in the academic freedom policy that took place roughly around the year 2002-2003. And that was important. But there's been more that's happened since then. And in particular in the last year, the issue has come up very, very actively: what are

the academic freedom rights of academics who are not faculty? For example, postdocs, academic researchers, librarians—they all have an academic role—but they aren't faculty members. The academic freedom policy as formulated back in 2002 and 2003 was formulated from the perspective of faculty. It stated some very clear principles, which I've already discussed, but it was really an academic freedom policy for faculty. And then it was extended a few years later by adding an addendum to the policy dealing with freedom of expression for students. I think I may have discussed my role in that as well.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: That was treated as an addendum to APM010, which is the academic freedom policy. But the issue of academics who are not faculty is a much stickier issue. It's come up a lot in union discussions. It's even come up as a part of the question of whether or not certain union members should become parts of the Academic Senate if it's the senate that's the guarantor of academic freedom. So it was a very ripe issue, and it was of great concern to the leadership of the systemwide Academic Senate. It was of great concern to the president, and provost, and to some of the regents, and there were a number of public comments in regents meetings about this as well. So it was clearly a ripe topic.

Ultimately, Michael Brown, with the agreement of the president, decided to appoint a task force to look at this issue and to make recommendations for what, if any, policies we should adopt with regard to academic freedom. In fact, he didn't use the word "academic freedom." He talked around it, because it wasn't clear at the time that academic freedom would be the right set of words to use. That was, in and of itself, a sensitive point. So he set up this special task force But it basically was to look at freedom of expression and academic rights of academics who are not faculty members.

He appointed Robert May,⁴³⁷ who's the current chair of the Academic Senate, and me to be the co-chairs of this task group, with representatives from faculty, from the senate, from committees on academic freedom, and from librarians; there was also a member from UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, which is another group that fits under this category.

So they set up this group. I was very pleased that Gail Hershatter,⁴³⁸ who chairs the UCSC Senate Committee on Academic Freedom, and who has a long and very thoughtful history in this area, was a member of the group. She was an important contributor. Another important contributor member of the group that I was very pleased they agreed to have her on it was Gayle Binion, who had been chair of the Academic Senate when the new modern academic freedom policy had been put in place. So that was a really, really good group.

So we had to deal with this issue. And again, it was complicated by ongoing union negotiations with librarians; Unit 18 lecturers (who are faculty members) already had academic freedom guarantees built into their contract. There were other groups as well where this was important. The university was largely refusing to negotiate. I wasn't interested in getting into union negotiations, by any means. But I was interested in coming up with a university policy that made sense, that was principled, and that was right. And it wasn't completely clear exactly how this would end up.

I was also very, very pleased; I was delighted that Robert May and I agreed that the one person we wanted to invite either to be a member of the group, or a consultant to the group, or basically a participant at the meetings no matter what his status would be, was Robert Post. Robert Post was the guy who actually drafted the academic freedom policy for UC. He did this at the request of Dick Atkinson back in 2002. He, at the time, was a

law professor at Berkeley, and he was one of the nation's experts on academic freedom issues. So he drafted the UC policy, or at least the first draft of it. But since then he left Berkeley and went to Yale University, where he became ultimately the dean of the law school at Yale. He is still a faculty member at Yale, although he stepped down as dean a few years ago. So we invited Robert to join us and were very pleased that Robert did join us. He actually physically attended a couple of our meetings and all the others he's attended by Zoom. So he has been a full participant in these discussions and lent a great deal of intellectual rigor to the discussions as well. So it was actually a good group and an interesting group. It was particularly interesting because Robert and I talked and we agreed that there were two models for how we might go. We were in some disagreement about which was the preferred one, but not wild disagreement. We both agreed there were two logical approaches. And we both agreed we'd wait and see how the committee shook out.

It did not take long. At our first meeting, we basically came up with the final answer. Now, I don't really mean the final, final answer. There was a lot of wordsmithing, a lot of devilry in details, a lot of issues that we had to resolve after that. But in terms of concept, we quickly agreed, number one, that it should be a policy on academic freedom, that if it quacks like a duck and if it looks like a duck, then we may as well just call it a duck. (Reti laughs)

Number two, we agreed that, unlike the situation for students, where it might have made sense to have it as an addendum to another policy, this really deserved to be its own separate policy. So we decided to make it APM011. And then we also agreed that, to the extent that academics within the university are doing things that are academic in nature—and I use those words because some jobs—librarian, being an example—some of the work that they do is truly academic and creative, etcetera, in the traditional sense of academic;

some of the work that they do is much more work that a staff member does, and would not necessarily fall under the academic purview, and would therefore not necessarily have the advantage of academic freedom, in terms of the actions that they might do in that portion of their jobs. Virtually everything that a faculty member does is covered by academic freedom—their research, obviously; their teaching, obviously; their public service and university service, equally obviously. They have the right to speak out. If they're on a senate committee, they have the right to criticize the administration. Those are all covered by academic freedom. So fortunately everything within the professional life of a faculty member is covered by academic freedom. But for other jobs at the university, of academics who are not faculty, that may not be the case. We had to recognize that important distinction. That distinction has caused us to spend a lot of time figuring out how to handle that distinction. That's one of the details that we have to figure out.

Reti: Over time people's jobs evolve. So if you tried codifying a policy based on job duties, the policy would soon be obsolete.

Blumenthal: I'll tell you where we went with this. I'll tell you in just one second, in fact. I just want to emphasize again, from our perspective, that means full protection of at least that portion of their jobs that are of an academic nature.

So how do we do this, and how do we make that determination? Therein lies an interesting set of questions because it is regental policy that it is the faculty and the Academic Senate that are the guarantors of academic freedom within the university. So from that it follows that if the senate is to be the guarantor of academic freedom for faculty, then why not for academics who are not faculty, and why wouldn't the process for academics who are not faculty be the same as it is for faculty, at least for the academic freedom piece of it.

That led us to the conclusion that if an academic who's not a faculty member were to have a grievance with regard to a dispute about academic freedom, the arbiter of that dispute should be the Senate Committee on Privilege and Tenure, which is where a senate member would take any complaint about academic freedom. Now I should explain that every campus has not just a Privilege and Tenure Committee, but also has a Committee on Academic Freedom, as ours does. But the Committee on Academic Freedom is a committee that can comment on academic freedom issues, can do investigations, if they want, about alleged violations of academic freedom. But they don't have authority to do anything about it. They have the authority of the press, or the written word. They can write a report; they can complain; they can make a big stink if something isn't going right. But they don't have the authority to do anything.

The Privilege and Tenure Committee does have a direct authority to make a recommendation to the campus, usually to the EVC, about complaints of violations of rights. In the overwhelming majority of grievances, no matter what they're about, that gets resolved right there. The EVC and the committee come to an agreement and that's the end of it. Yes there are occasionally cases that might go to a hearing or something, but that's by far the exception rather than the rule.

So the Privilege and Tenure Committee has much more authority to actually do something. And they're the committee that normally does investigate grievances of all sorts, whether they be personnel actions, or whether they be academic freedom violations or allegations thereof.

We felt that the only way to make this make sense would be to have the Privilege and Tenure Committee investigate allegations of academic freedom violations, even by academics who are not themselves members of the Academic Senate. Now that has two

significant issues associated with it. One issue is how do you decide what is and what isn't a violation of academic freedom? I mean, what is or what isn't associated with that part of the job of a staff member, or of an academic who is doing work where part of their job might be academic in nature and part of their job non-academic in nature? How do you make that determination? The other question is what if a complaint turns out not to be seen as a violation of academic freedom investigable by Privilege and Tenure, but it's still a complaint, where should that go?

The answer to the second part of that question is pretty simple. There is an existing APM section, I forget, APM 140, which is the procedures by which staff members can file grievances that says that their privileges have been violated. There's a well-defined set of policies—it's a long section of the APM. We considered modifying it a little bit to be a little bit more clarifying about these particular cases, and ultimately, after a lot of debate back and forth (and I changed my mind two or three times in this debate) we ultimately pretty much converged on not changing it, largely because changing a section of the APM is fraught. You touch one little piece of it and everybody wants to change every other little piece of it. We felt we were opening Pandora's Box if we did that. So we just decided to leave it alone and deal with everything that we needed to say with the new APM section.

So the idea is that an academic who feels that their privileges have been violated, or their academic freedom has been violated, really has two choices. They could go, if they want, if they feel like it's part of their job that isn't protected by academic freedom—they could use the APM 140 route to prove it. Or they could go to the campus Committee on Privilege and Tenure and grieve it there. Presumably, that grievance would be treated the same way for that academic as it would be for any faculty member, that is the P&T committee would investigate it, decide whether there's a prima facie case that the academic freedom has been violated, discuss what remedies might be appropriate, do some investigating, and

make a recommendation ultimately if there is a violation to the EVC, or to the relevant academic officer. It could be the chancellor, if it involved the EVC, for example. But usually it's the EVC.

So that's the idea, that a staff member could do that. The other little twist is that APM140 has a little clause that says you have to file this in a timely fashion. I forget the exact time frames. It's possible that somebody could instead feel that their academic freedom rights were violated, go to Privilege and Tenure, which could do an investigation, and could conclude that this did not involve academic freedom after all. We didn't want to preclude someone from then going to APM140 and arguing that their other rights were violated. So we put in a stipulation that this extends the clock on APM140. So that's basically the outline of the policy.

In terms of the fundamental principles involved, we basically resolved it the first day. There's a lot of details here, so we had a number of meetings. We also agreed that it was important always to take account of professional standards. We had lots of discussions about what are professional standards, and which groups have them and which groups don't, and how does UC decide which standards we should follow, and which ones we shouldn't. That's also difficult, because there're a myriad of groups here. Librarians have various national standards, but I'm not sure the A & R people do. I'm not saying they don't, but I'm just saying there are groups that don't obviously have the same level of national standards that librarians have. So we've had lots of discussions about that. For faculty it's easy, because there are national norms of expectations of how faculty behave. Those norms are expressed in the faculty code of conduct, for example. They're expressed by the Association of University Professors in various documents. There're lots of national organizations we talk about regarding faculty members. But it's a little harder in some of these other groups. So we had to deal with that. But it was important. Just as the

fundamental academic freedom policy talks about professional standards, it was important that we recognize that and acknowledge that. So we had a lot of discussion about how best to do that in such an amorphous situation where not everyone has well-defined standards.

Then we decided that this was such a controversial topic, and there were so many people exercised about it, that we decided to meet with all the various constituency groups. So we met with librarians; we met with library staff, the library union. We met with ANR people. We met with postdocs and researchers. There's a few other groups. We met with each of them. We had one day where we just did Zoom meeting after Zoom meeting after Zoom meeting. And it was really kind of interesting because, by and large, those groups were very supportive of what we did. In fact, the librarian union was so funny because they came in ready to fight. They sent us a document the night before staking their position that they would never back away from. And when I summarized what we were doing, we were kind of met with astonishment. They said, "Are you actually going to use the words *academic freedom*?" I said yeah.

Reti: Wow. That's great.

Blumenthal: I almost had to say it two or three times because they couldn't quite believe that we had gotten to where we had gotten.

Reti: Yeah. Well, you know, there's been a long history of not seeing librarians as academics.

Blumenthal: Yes. So my sense was, yes, there's a few small points. But by and large I felt that each of the constituent groups were, I wrote in my notes, "shockingly supportive." I had expected more pushback of one sort or another.

So we sent it out for formal comments. And of course it goes out to everybody, all the administrations, all of the campus divisions, all of the senate committees on the campuses.

Reti: And this is systemwide?

Blumenthal: Systemwide committees and campus committees.

Reti: So you were meeting with UCSC stakeholders, but also this was going on systemwide?

Blumenthal: I have not myself met with UCSC stakeholders. The campus stakeholders within the senate would send their comments to the campus senate, which will then send them to the systemwide senate. And the campus stakeholders within the administration would send their comments probably to Herbie Lee (I forget who it was), but they would send those comments along to probably Michael Brown or Susan Carlson. So there's a well-defined chain.

Reti: Right. Okay.

Blumenthal: We are actually meeting in a week to go over those comments. I haven't seen them yet, so I can't really discuss them because I don't even know what they are. From what I understand, there's a lot of support. There is some criticism. I'm not sure I know all of the criticisms. The main criticism I'm aware of is that some of the Privilege and Tenure committees are pushing back on the added workload that would be involved. That was not unanticipated. Robert May and I are in complete agreement about this. We're disinclined to be sympathetic, because it seems to me we're in a situation where either the senate is going to accept the role of being the guarantor of academic freedom, in which case they've got to do something to guarantee it, or they give up that role and let

somebody else be the guarantor of academic freedom, which I think the senate would have fundamental concerns about. I think it's an either/or.

And in terms of how much workload it will actually be—again, I haven't read the criticisms yet—but my sense is, much less than you think. When we were meeting stakeholders, we asked librarians, particularly the union, to talk about cases that had come up and how frequent they were. Some people were saying, “Oh, these happen all the time, and this is really serious.” But my sense was it really wasn't happening all the time. And even if it were happening fairly often, in some sense, the mere fact that there's a mechanism now would be an inhibitor for it to continue. It's kind of like sexual harassment. I believe, maybe I'm wrong, that we're seeing a lot of sexual harassment cases now particularly because the university as a whole, in our culture, in our system, has not been adequately attentive to sexual harassment over the years. And therefore, now that we are attentive, people are bringing cases that have been dormant for a while. We need to clear the decks and once we clear the cases that have been ongoing for a while, I suspect the number of new cases that arise will be much less than the number of cases we're seeing currently. I could be wrong. It's a prediction based on a theory. We will see whether I'm right or not. I think it's likely that's the case of sexual harassment and I think that will be the case here in the case of violations of academic freedom.

So we'll see how much of an issue it is. I will say that on our campus, (I think I may have mentioned this earlier) when I became chair of Privilege and Tenure, there had not been P&T hearing for fifteen years. And yes, we did have some hearings, and there have been some ongoing since then. During the past year, there may have been one hearing; the year before, maybe one hearing. So one a year is kind of typical for, at least, our P&T committee, for hearings. Some years it might be two, who knows, but it's not outrageously large. It's hard for me to believe that adding in these other non-senate academics is going

to change that in a fundamental way. It might change it by 25 percent, but that's the most it will change.

Reti: So, George, have other research universities taken up this question across the country?

Blumenthal: So that's a really good question. Thank you for asking it. We did look into that and it's really quite interesting because a lot of universities have statements on their websites and in their policy, general statements, about protecting the academic freedom of the entire academic community, or even about the academic freedom of the entire community, irrespective of their employment status. There are some really broad statements out there about protecting academic freedom. But if you actually look at those universities and ask what are the mechanisms by which those protections occur, the answer is there's nothing backing them up. So it's one thing to be really outspoken about how much you value the principle. To me, that's meaningless unless you actually have a well-defined mechanism by which you ensure that you value it. I think we are very much ahead of the crowd on this.

Reti: That's exciting. And what is the timeframe? This has not yet been approved by the regents, right?

Blumenthal: I don't think it needs to go to the regents.

Reti: Oh, it doesn't need to. I was trying to figure that out.

Blumenthal: We've had this big debate, and I've been the one who's argued that it doesn't need to go to the regents. This is an APM section. I do not believe that the previous policy on academic freedom went to the regents. The only section of the APM that ever goes to the regents is the faculty code of conduct. That's been a long tradition that no one's

questioned and I'm not questioning it now. I'm just saying, that's the only section. So I don't think it needs to go to the regents. I think it needs to get approved by the president. But the process is we'll get back the comments; we'll meet as a task force and see whether or not we want to make changes as a result of these comments. Again, not having seen the comments, I'm not sure, but I'm skeptical that we'll make big changes. Then once we've finalized our draft, I think it goes out for final review. There's a process of final review on the APM. My sense is that those final reviews are pretty pro forma. If you want to object to something, don't wait till the final review, basically. I'm quite confident the president will issue it once it gets through the process. She seemed very supportive to it. I've reported on this to the other chancellors. They're very supportive. I don't see fundamental objections anywhere. And even people who didn't want to use the word "academic freedom," (like I think Robert wouldn't have wanted to do that at first) I think they're now onboard.

Reti: Mm hmm. There's a whole group of staff who perhaps might need to be educated about what academic freedom is. How will that be accomplished so that they can make sure they ask for it when they need it? (laughs)

Blumenthal: Well, that's a really good question and I'm not sure I have a good answer for you. For a represented staff, my guess is that they will get that through their union. For a staff who are non-represented, who are academics, in a sense it is the responsibility of the university to make sure people know their rights. And it would seem to me that if a staff member's covered by this policy, they should get a copy of the policy when it's approved.

Reti: And read it. Right.

Blumenthal: On the other hand, having been around the university a long time, when somebody sends me, “Here’s a new policy in the APM,” I tend to toss it. So I think that what’s really important is for staff members to know where to go when they think something is wrong. If they want to learn about it, great. I think everyone should learn about it who can. But I think the key is having it be transparent enough when you need it.

Reti: So you can consult the policy if you start to get uncomfortable with what’s happening.

Blumenthal: And we may want to put up some website. I can imagine putting up a website, I’m not sure where the logical place would be. I’m just not sure.

Reti: This is new territory. It crosses over different parts of the house.

Blumenthal: It crosses over. One place I could do it is the Staff Advisory Board.

Reti: Oh, that would be a good place. Well, this is exciting, really.

Blumenthal: Yeah, I think it’s exciting. I think it’s important because it takes us into a new territory. And honest to God, I didn’t think this was going to be as easy as it was. I thought this could end up being in a big morass, a big fight. But it has been remarkably easy. Have we agreed on everything? No. We’ve had some disagreements. But by and large, we converged really fast. And it sure helped to have someone of the intellectual integrity of Robert Post onboard. He played a key role in this. I so appreciate it. He didn’t get paid for doing this. He just did it out of, partly his love of UC, even though he’s no longer a UC faculty member, partly his deep concern about the issue of academic freedom, and his interest in the issue, per se.

So to me, this was a big success.

Planning for Doctoral and Professional Education

Reti: Next is planning for doctoral and professional education.

Blumenthal: I don't think we've discussed that.

Reti: No, we have not.

Blumenthal: I think you even left it off your list because I don't think you knew what it was.

Reti: I had no idea. But this is excellent. I'm really glad we're going to cover that.

Blumenthal: So we have to go back in time a bit for this one to when M.R.C. [Greenwood] was provost and I was chair of the senate, M.R.C. and I agreed to establish a group called Planning for Doctoral and Professional Education. Why would we do such a thing? The reason we did this was because we recognized, number one, that doctoral and professional education was getting short shrift in the legislature. No legislator was interested in graduate education. They were only interested in how many undergraduates the university had. We wanted to highlight the importance of this issue. Secondly, there had just been a study done showing that UC offers our doctoral students something like 2,000 dollars less per year in support compared to our comparison eight institutions. So on a financial basis, we actually were not competitive with other universities. And third, and maybe even most important, we had just gone through this humongous fight with the CSU system on the issue of whether or not the CSU could offer an EDD degree.

Reti: Yes, I remember that because I happened to be interviewing M.R.C. right during this period. So we talked about that.

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah. M.R.C. was circling the wagons, and she was ready to fight to the death on this one. And frankly, I was not. I just never thought it was that important an issue. But she really believed it was, being especially concerned about mission creep. In any event, that fight went on. It was really a big fight with CSU. And ultimately there was a compromise—it turned out it was a short-lived compromise—but the compromise was that UC agreed to do joint EDD programs with the CSUs. So Santa Cruz was setting up an EDD program with CSUMB and with San Jose State.

Reti: M.R.C.'s Greenwood discussed this in her oral history. Why wasn't it a big issue for you?

Blumenthal: Number one, I didn't think the EDD degree was that important a degree. I thought it was a glorified master's degree. And CSU does offer a master's degree. Number two, I heard a talk from Arthur Levine, who just retired as the president of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. He's one of the major figures in national higher education. Art had basically written some articles arguing that the EDD degree was pretty worthless, but it was a convenience for school administrators who wanted to move up the ladder. And third, I thought that politically it seemed like a fight we would lose at the end. It's okay to fight a losing battle if it's really about a fundamental principle. And I didn't feel that this was principled. M.R.C. would argue that this was the camel's nose under the tent of differentiation between UC and CSU.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: It was not an unreasonable argument for her to make. I just didn't agree with her.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: Simultaneously with all of this, the issue of audiology had come up because the national audiologists were starting to require a doctoral degree in order to be an audiologist, and to get a license. So it was a licensure issue. California audiologists had master's degrees, and although I think there was one or maybe two programs at UC, there were also programs at CSUs. The question was, what do we do with them? I think the decision was finally made at that time to also do joint programs between CSU and UC. So we patched some Band-Aids over this issue on audiology and EDDs, Band-Aids that it was pretty clear, at least in terms of EDD, I didn't think were going to last. Audiology, I wasn't so sure about. But I also saw the smoke on the horizon because the physical therapists, the nurse practitioners, and other groups nationally were starting to insist upon doctoral degrees, or moving in that direction. And those were much bigger deals. There's a hundred times more physical therapists than there are audiologists. And same with nurse practitioners. So this was clearly going to be an issue that was going to come up over and over and over again. The question for UC is: to what extent is UC willing to meet the needs of the state of California in this regard? I mean, that was certainly the case of the EDDs: to what extent do we want to offer EDDs? I just thought it was a waste of effort.

So anyway, that was going on in the backdrop. And, of course, we know that a few years later CSU pulled out of the EDD agreement. Essentially it was a mandate from Charlie Reed, the chancellor of the CSU system. So we had to abruptly halt our programs with San Jose State and CSUMB, not because we wanted to, and I actually believe, although they never said this explicitly, I don't think they wanted to, either. But I think they were mandated to by the system. Audiology, I think, still continues as joint programs, but there aren't that many audiologists, so I'm not sure it's a big deal.

But anyway, one of the other issues for PDPE was to make sense out of all of this. And then there were also the issues of competing degrees at UC, and which degrees should be

offered and which ones shouldn't. So all that kind of got mushed over to this PDPE committee. So it was actually a very interesting group that was put together. I was there, I think first as the senate chair, then as the former senate chair, and then as the chancellor at Santa Cruz. Quentin Williams was also in the group. He had been the chair of CCGA and that was what brought him onto the group. The group was originally chaired by Rory Hume, who'd been brought on by M.R.C. to be the associate provost of the university. Rory, of course, didn't stay long in that role because when M.R.C. resigned, he succeeded her as provost.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: The group started out very strong when Rory was leading it. But when Rory stepped out—and I think he continued for a little while as provost—but then he turned it over to Steve Beckwith, who was the new vice president of research and graduate education. But Beckwith was actually not the least bit interested in graduate education. His only interest was in research. We continued on for another year or two under Beckwith, but I think he dissolved the group as quickly as he could.

Reti: That's too bad.

Blumenthal: But interesting things happened in these areas. Overall, the group continued for several years. One of the things that we did that I think was really important was we helped put in place what I think of as a historic compromise between two campuses, Irvine and Riverside. Riverside had long had a desire to start a medical school, but they also had a strong desire to start a law school. The arguments were that they serve a diverse population and we need more lawyers that serve diverse populations. Irvine also wanted to start a law school, and they argued that they were one of the top universities in the country, a member of the AAU, that they had a very, very strong program in law and

society, and that this would be a great segue into a law school. Both Irvine and Riverside submitted proposals to the system to start a new law school.

And as CCGA was wont to do, they evaluated those proposals. They sent them off for external review. The result was that there was a general consensus that the Riverside proposal was far better than the Irvine proposal. So even though Irvine was better situated—in terms of money, resources, and the law and society program, which was very strong at Irvine—despite all that, their proposal wasn't that good. But Riverside had given a lot of thought to their proposal and really crafted something very good. This wasn't inconsistent with the history. Historically, Irvine was notorious in senate circles for submitting crappy proposals to systemwide, and then complaining when they weren't immediately approved. That has long been, and as far as I know might even still be Irvine's modus operandi. They really don't do good proposals.

So there we were. And in some sense, on the objective merits, Irvine was the logical place to put a law school. On the other hand, Riverside—how can you not do something for a school that put together a great proposal? So we discussed that lot, what to do. The one thing we all agreed on with unanimity was that there was not a need for two law schools. And of course many people argued there wasn't a need for one law school. But certainly there wasn't a need for two. So we had to choose. And of course, as academics, we're not good at choosing. So finally we came up with this compromise that we would approve a medical school at Riverside and we would fast track it, in exchange for which they would give up the law school. Then Irvine would get a law school.

Reti: It was a compromise, a true political compromise.

Blumenthal: It was a compromise. And in fact, Irvine did have more money in hand than Riverside did. They did do a great start to a law school. They brought in a founding

dean who was fantastic, who is now the dean of law at Berkeley, Erwin Chemerinsky. And the Irvine law school is—I don't know where it's ranked today—but it's probably among the top fifteen in the country. They did a very good job of starting their law school. And as I recall, they actually made it tuition-free for their first and second year class, so that they could get the best students. They had the money to make it work.

Reti: Yes. It often comes down to that, doesn't it?

Blumenthal: It does often come down to that. So they had to fight to get it. There was a lot of opposition at the state level to another law school. And of course they argued, I think, justifiably so, that there was room for another UC-quality law school, even if there isn't need for more law training in the state. So that worked and Riverside is up and running on their new medical school. So it turned out okay. But PDPE played an important role in that compromise of getting us to that good place.

Another thing that came out of PDPE that I think really deserves mention, and I think has been lost to history, is that the committee formed a subcommittee chaired by Quentin Williams to look at this question of what are the principles by which we should decide which degrees are appropriate to offer at just UC, and which degrees should be appropriate to be offered by the CSUs. The way it worked then, maybe even still now, in some sense, is that's a legislative decision. The legislature can pass a bill and if they want the CSUs to offer PhDs, they can do it. If they want the CSUs to offer MDs, they can do it. They can do anything they want at the legislative level.

Reti: So that would not necessitate revisiting the Master Plan?

Blumenthal: It would be a revision of the Master Plan.

Reti: Yeah, it would be.

Blumenthal: But the Master Plan doesn't have force of law.

Reti: Ah, right. Okay. Important to remember.

Blumenthal: So they could do that if they wanted to. It's up to the legislature. It certainly makes me uncomfortable to have this issue of mission creep solely in the hands of the legislature, which tends to make decisions based on the spur of the moment, or on political considerations, rather than on principle.

Quentin wrote this report which I thought was outstanding. He made a number of very principled recommendations about how to distinguish between those degrees that should only be UC-offered, versus those degrees that might be appropriate for a CSU to offer at the doctoral level. It was the first time that I'd ever seen anything written that made sense on that. Everybody had a political perspective. Quentin's group wrote this report that I thought was outstanding, that stands in my mind as one of the finest reports I've ever read. This was kind of buried. That report came out not too long before the committee disbanded and I have the sense that it didn't have much influence at the end of the day at the Office of the President. I think people forgot about it. I'm the only one who remembers it. Quentin, I suspect, remembers it as well.

Reti: (laughs) I hope so.

Blumenthal: I remember being so, so impressed with that report. It really took on this very difficult issue and came up with some principles to address them.

And the other thing we did is again, we did some work on graduate support, where we looked at the methodology of how we determine graduate support and what we should do. Nothing specific came out of that committee on that issue, although I think that the work we did was the forerunner of two major changes that came somewhat later, but

emanated from some of the preliminary work that we had done. Those two changes were, one, systemwide, a decision was made just a short time later to allow PhD students who had passed their qualifying exam to have three years of in-state tuition, even if they're foreign students or out-of-state students. So the trick is that once they pass their qualifying exam, which means advancing to candidacy, they'll be treated as an in-state student for three years as a way of ensuring that completing their PhD is more affordable. I think that's one of the things that came out of our recommendation.

The other came somewhat later and again, I'm not sure if this is in direct connection with what we did. But basically the campuses individually, one by one, got rid of nonresident tuition for first-year and second-year students. We did that only fairly recently. I think we started that movement, but I couldn't point to it and say, there's a direct connection. But anyway, that was PDPE, which I actually thought was a group that in some ways should have continued and should have had long-lasting impact. Again, I think Steve was just not interested in it.

More on the

Monterey Bay Education, Science, and Technology Center (MBEST)

Okay, let's go on to MBEST. I talked a lot about MBEST in my first year as acting chancellor. This is really just an effort to say a few words about what happened in the ensuing years. Well, to some extent, the sturm and drang of the first year continued into the future. It went through periods of being quieter, and then went through flurries of activity and anger. Basically, there were those who wanted the university to develop stuff there that would be a stimulant to the economy. Just to remind you, the goal of MBEST was to create the kind of university presence that would encourage companies from Silicon Valley to locate in the Monterey area, the idea being that Silicon Valley was filling

up; Monterey was the next logical place to go to, a pleasant place to be, and that would be the economic boon for Monterey County.

It didn't happen. The dot com bust basically took care of that. There was a certain unreality there. So the backup position was, well, we the university had benefited by getting all this land and a building. Why didn't we do more there? And the answer is, what? We spent a lot of time trying to look at faculty and look at programs that might have some professional benefit from being at MBEST. We did manage over the course of time to develop a number of really serious collaborations between the School of Engineering and the Naval Postgraduate School. So they actually have a fair number of programs working with them. Darrell Long⁴³⁹ is down there, various other faculty as well. In fact, their former provost, Leonard Ferrari,⁴⁴⁰ is now in the School of Engineering as emeritus, and worked quite actively to make something happen.

So we were developing some really strong connections with the Naval Postgraduate School. But in terms of MBEST itself, we struggled to find things that could go there. We were open to renting or even selling some land to somebody who may want to do something that was related to the university. I remember in the early days, we had a proposal for a dog training school down there. (Reti laughs) And I remember Dave Klinger basically decided to reject that out of hand and I couldn't object. It didn't seem related to what we were doing.

But periodically, Sam Farr would get really involved with us. That kind of came and went. It flared up again and he encouraged us to have a number of meetings with other constituents down there. Meanwhile, FORA itself and Michael Houlemard were trying to be helpful and encouraging. But the politics at FORA itself were horrible. Michael was

very helpful and really committed to doing something. I can't speak highly enough of Michael's role down there. But it was difficult and we didn't make much progress.

Sam got us to have some meetings with CSUMB to see if we could do some things jointly. That just didn't go very well. I think he put pressure on them to get them to ask us for land, to give them land. I thought the arguments that they presented for why they needed that land, like, "We don't have enough land to offer a biology program," I thought just didn't ring true. I thought it was ridiculous on its face. And furthermore, legally, first of all, I don't have the authority to do anything. It would have to go to the regents. And secondly, there are various acts that restrict what we can do with land. It doesn't mean we can't do anything with it, but we certainly can't easily give away land. And somehow there is this vision of us that persisted, that we're land banking and making all of this money off of this land down at MBEST. In fact, it's been a huge money loser for us. It has been a drain on the financial resources of the campus. If I could go back and say let MBEST never happen, I think it would be a huge benefit to the campus. We have struggled to figure out what to do with that.

Reti: Has there ever been a consideration of putting housing down there for UCSC?

Blumenthal: Yeah, actually that was one of the first things I thought about doing. And the problem with housing is traffic. It takes forever to get from Watsonville to here. Can you imagine what it's like from Monterey? So I had a great idea. I said, what if we put in some hovercraft that could go across Monterey Bay?

Reti: (laughs) Really, George?

Blumenthal: No, I made that suggestion. I said, "Let's look into that." But it turns out you can't do that because Monterey Bay is a national sanctuary. You can't use hovercraft. So you're just caught at every turn. If there were a train, or something.

Reti: Yeah. I was just thinking it's too bad that train was taken out, the Del Monte.

Blumenthal: Yeah. The new train—if it ever happens, it will be decades away.

Anyway, so they were weak arguments. Sam Farr was really pushing us hard. He felt we had not kept to our promises. He said Bob Sinsheimer wanted to have an industrial park on the campus and couldn't do it because of local concerns, which is true. He said this was an opportunity to fulfill Sinsheimer's dream without having to do it on campus, and that's why they gave us the land. My attitude was okay, but first of all, I'm not sure Sinsheimer's dream was viable in the first place. And secondly, even if it were viable in Santa Cruz, that doesn't mean it would be in Monterey.

Anyhow, finally I realized I had to do something. The pressures were getting too big. This is why I've always felt so unhappy about the Monterey situation, because I feel as though our hands are tied. I would love to tell you that I was this great visionary leader who could make the right things happen. But I felt like getting anything done there was going to be horrendously difficult.

My vision for that place was to have academic-related activities somehow associated with the core of MBEST, and surround it with other activities, commercial activities that somehow might relate to the university, much as UCSD is surrounded by companies that relate to the university. I thought if we could create something equivalent down at MBEST, that would be a huge, huge advantage for everybody. That was my vision. But the truth is, we made little progress on that vision because we couldn't find people or organizations of that ilk that who wanted to locate there. We couldn't find companies that were interested, and we couldn't find faculty on campus that had legitimate research activities that called for them to be in Monterey. If you're a faculty member at Santa Cruz,

particularly in engineering, if you're going to go travel, you're going to go travel over the hill to Silicon Valley, not down to Monterey.

Reti: But what about the whole marine science connection which, as we've discussed before, is the strongest collaboration across the bay.

Blumenthal: Absolutely. It's a very strong collaboration and it's great. But the problem is that they already have the collaboration. And I'm not aware that our folks need more space down there. If they do, we'd happily give it to them. But that's just not the issue.

So we literally didn't make much progress. I went to one or two FORA meetings and soon realized that I wanted to avoid FORA like the plague, because the politics down there were cutthroat. You know, they often say about academics, that never have so many fought so hard about so many issues about so little. FORA feels like the same way. Lots of fights, and very little at stake. And then, as FORA began to reach the end of its legislative lifetime, and was renewed once, then there was the issue of the voting status of the two universities: CSUMB and UC Santa Cruz. I got a call from Dianne Harrison,⁴⁴¹ the then-president of CSUMB. She lobbied me hard, to push very hard on our legislators to insist that they renew FORA only if the two colleges get voting rights, which put me in a very awkward position. My inclination was to not want voting rights because when you've got voting rights, then you have to participate, and vote, and make enemies. (laughter)

Reti: Right, right. It's not about detachment. No.

Blumenthal: That's right. She was heavily involved. She really wanted to have that vote. She felt like a second-class citizen. So at the end of the day, I nominally supported her position because I didn't want to leave a colleague out to dry, so to speak. My heart wasn't in it. But I wouldn't abandon her.

But anyway, it was renewed without voting rights for the colleges and universities.

Reti: Without.

Blumenthal: Without, because the other members of FORA were against it.

So at a certain point, I decided that we needed to do something new and different and break the pattern. So we did something that I called the revisioning process. Michael Houlemard⁴⁴² bought into it, and in fact he paid for part of it. We at UCSC led it, but Michael really was a key player in this and we invited the other members of the FORA board to participate, as well as the CSUMB people. The idea was to bring in outside consultants to look at MBEST, and to look at it from the standpoint of economic development, and to see how it could best fulfill an economic development role.

I want to emphasize here that as the chancellor of UCSC, my primary mission is the advancement of UC Santa Cruz. It is not the economic development of Santa Cruz. or Monterey, or Silicon Valley. or anywhere else. It's the advancement of UC Santa Cruz. Now, often the advancement of UC Santa Cruz goes hand-in-hand with economic developments. Economic development is a good thing and it may in fact advance the university. But it isn't the prime directive, so to speak. I just want to be clear about that. And I was always very clear about that. On the other hand, the Monterey folks always talked as though our prime issue needed to be economic development.

Reti: The Monterey folks, meaning FORA or CSUMB?

Blumenthal: FORA folks and various government entities there. I thought doing revisioning made sense. I had no objections to basing revisioning on economic development, because to the extent that the university could play a role in that, that would

advance the university as well. And furthermore, I thought that this would help separate the realm of the possible from the realm of the impossible.

So we brought in outside consultants. They recommended that we bring in a bunch of tenants. They said the way to do that is to have a core tenant who's big and powerful and attracts a bunch of other tenants to come with them. They could either buy land or rent land or whatever, but the synergy of everyone and the university being together would be a great thing. They told us what we knew already. And they really suggested this core tenant.

So we made some efforts to reach out to various entities that might constitute a core tenant. We never got very far, to put it as bluntly as possible. The place where we got the farthest was actually, believe it or not, was NPS, the Naval Postgraduate School. They were looking to move their campus. We had land. We thought that if NPS were associated with MBEST then the synergies could be really significant, especially if UCSC played more of an active role. I thought that was something that could be really, really good. However, just as those discussions were getting started in a serious way with NPS, the quote "scandals" at NPS erupted. I don't know how much you know about them.

Reti: I don't.

Blumenthal: All right. So let's put a pin where we are, on NPS. NPS was the Naval Postgraduate School. They have been around a long time. They do important work. They train a large number of graduate students, primarily from the military. They do a lot of research. They do a lot of good research. They have pretty good faculty, actually. The provost at the time was Leonard Ferrari, who's a very legitimate academic. Their president was an admiral, Dan Oliver.⁴⁴³ He seemed like a good guy. I've always kind of liked him. Leonard, as the provost, was very aggressive in seeking out partnerships. He

had partnerships with UC Santa Barbara; he was developing more and more partnerships with UC Santa Cruz. He was developing partnerships with other universities. He really wanted NPS to be a research environment, be seen as a major university research player. And he was succeeding.

And then, it all went to hell. Again, I don't know all of the details of the politics that brought this all about. But the navy office of, I don't know, investigations, or some navy auditor started looking at what they were doing at NPS and decided that what they were doing was not consonant with the procedures of the navy.

And essentially, one of the major allegedly bad things was that they were in all of these agreements with other entities like universities and that they hadn't followed every procedure to get that approved. So basically, the president was removed, Admiral Oliver was removed. I think he was never found guilty of anything, but he was removed summarily from office. And Leonard was removed as well from office. But Leonard decided he would fight anything against him. Nothing was ever brought against him, and ultimately I think he was exonerated because all he was ever trying to do was to build academic partnerships.

Reti: This is a scandal?

Blumenthal: That was the scandal.

Reti: Okay. I was expecting something really horrible. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Yeah, usually it would be something really juicy. Actually, the scandal was that there wasn't any scandal. It was a non-scandal. But two good people were basically removed from office. Leonard Ferrari was then sent—the navy gave him a really cushy job for the next few years. They sent him to England to be the representative of the navy in

terms of research collaborations in Europe. They wouldn't have given him a great job like that if he were really under a cloud.

Reti: Right. I see. So they just didn't politically approve of these kinds of collaborations.

Blumenthal: I think somebody back there didn't. Look, the Naval Postgraduate School has always lived on the edge. Every few years, somebody decides they don't need the Naval Postgraduate School. I think that there's some kind of political thing going on that I don't really understand. But Leonard came back to NPS and then decided to retire and then come to UC Santa Cruz. He's here now. He's on some visitor status, but he's basically an emeriti here. He's got space here in engineering.

So why am I telling you all this? Because this was about the time when we were having discussions with NPS. I remember when they got their new president, who was another admiral, I went down to see him and he seemed like a really nice guy. We had a very pleasant conversation, but every time I suggested some kind of collaboration on something, his basic answer was, "Don't talk to me for a year about collaborations on anything, because I've got to keep this place so clean you can eat off it." (Reti laughs) You know what I mean. So basically, anything about them was off the table.

We tried some other possibilities. They didn't pan out. So at the end of the day, I set up an advisory group to the university for the Monterey folks and met a few times. It was fine, but we never really got anywhere. Things just plain didn't get very far.

Now while all this was going on for years, first Dave Kliger and then Alison Galloway both were of the view that the only sensible thing for UC to do would be to sell the land and get out of Dodge. Their motivation was that we were losing money. We were maintaining a real estate office; we were renting space. We were not making money off the rents that we were getting down there. We were losing money every year. We were getting no academic

benefit to speak of. Why were we expending university resources on something that wasn't bringing us a benefit?

I was more reluctant to do that because I felt that there just might be some great opportunity down there that we would miss. And I was reluctant to sell off a resource that could conceivably pay dividends down the line to the university, even if I couldn't exactly see what it was going to do. So I resisted Dave for a long time on this.

Reti: Well, you also had a congressman who was very much in favor of your involvement, which would have political repercussions, I'd imagine.

Blumenthal: But even without the congressman, I would have taken that view. I didn't want to forestall a future that might potentially—I didn't want this to be Blumenthal's Folly. (Reti laughs) It's not that I really cared personally. I just didn't want to make a mistake that we would regret as a campus later.

But after years of this and years of frustration, I finally relented and said, "Look, let's just sell the land." I still wanted to maintain the central core as being university land, but I agreed to sell off as much of the rest as we could. It's complicated because we don't have enough water down there. We only have enough water for about half of the land we own. But on the other hand, if we sold some of it to some other entity that had water, or had access to water, that might be possible, but that would certainly decrease the value of the property.

Well, having made that decision, it turns out nothing is ever easy. Most of our land is in the city of Marina. To sell the land, you have to subdivide it. You have to do certain kinds of maps. You need to do all kinds of paperwork to—I don't even know all the stuff you have to do. People who are city planners know all of this stuff. But you have to do a lot of stuff that's actually costly to do.

So we decided to start that process and we agreed to pay for it. We agreed to pay for it jointly with the city of Marina, which wanted us to do this. It turned out to be a nightmare. We've been doing this now with the city of Marina for about three years and we're still not completely done. Roughly every year for each of the last three years, there's a flare-up where the FORA people will start to scream at me, saying, "Why are you holding us up?" when in fact we've done everything that we could, and it's the city of Marina—which is a member of FORA—which is holding us up. They don't want to go any faster. They always have excuses for why they can't go faster. It's a bloody nightmare. We've made progress now. We are making progress. But it's crazy getting anything done down there. The idea that we're going to create this vibrant, Silicon Valley-like park in an area where you can't get a simple thing like that planning stuff done just is crazy to me.

And as I say, every year we're losing money. We finally sold the west campus. We have a buyer for that. We got a fair chunk, I think four or five million dollars for that. And we'd already sold—I forget what the building is called—we had this small second building which we sold some years ago because we couldn't use it. We couldn't occupy it because it didn't meet UC standards. So we are proceeding. Again, I really wanted to maintain the UCSC core there.

And then there's another complication, just to make life even more complicated. Namely, early on, long before my time, UC Santa Cruz made a commitment to both develop a habitat plan for the whole FORA property, for the whole Fort Ord, and to operate the reserve—

Reti: Oh, the Fort Ord Dunes Reserve, part of the UC Natural Reserve System.⁴⁴⁴

Blumenthal: We agreed to run the reserve. We're stuck with it. And that costs as well. So the agreement had been that we would be reimbursed for doing the habitat plan and

that they would develop an endowment which would fund the reserve in perpetuity, based upon land sales of other FORA property throughout FORA. However, they haven't sold a lot of land, or developed a lot of land with FORA. So there, at least at the moment, isn't a significant endowment. There is no money to do that. Probably what we'll do—again, I'm not the chancellor anymore—but probably what we should do is take that four or five million dollars that we got from that sale and put it into a quasi-endowment secretly, sort of in our own minds. We shouldn't have to pay for it ourselves. We should keep that aside so it isn't a constant drain on the campus resources. Again, it's not my call to do that. But that was sort of in my mind for what we would do. Then if we ever do get money from the rest of FORA, then we can use that money for something else. That's why I said quasi-endowment.

FORA is going out of existence soon. It is not going to be renewed again. I think it's only got another year or year and a half to go and it will go poof into thin air, perhaps replaced by some other entity without the authority of the redevelopment board. I'm not sure what's going to happen financially. But I am sure that we're stuck with this reserve, which we will have to pay for as a campus. So in fact, theoretically this investing not only has lost us money every year since we got it, but it may actually cost us money in perpetuity. That's why I find it so depressing. Not that the reserve is a bad thing. That's all good. But it isn't necessarily what we would have done if left to our own devices.

And lack of water remains a big issue. People hold onto their water. The vision is still a big issue. We've got people there who think that the MBEST land should return to farming; there are people who think we should bring in Silicon Valley-type companies; there are people who think we should give it all to CSUMB; there are people who think we should develop our own campus there. We've got people who think we should build a new UC campus there so we don't have to grow in Santa Cruz.

Reti: Really?

Blumenthal: Yeah.

Reti: Is that a viable plan?

Blumenthal: I think not.

Reti: Because the state would have to fund it?

Blumenthal: I think if you're going to build a new campus, you need to build it big enough to be viable long-term. Merced will be viable when it's big enough. I don't see that. Furthermore, if UC's going to build a whole new campus in Monterey at Fort Ord, then it would require not a commitment from the campus; it would require a major commitment from the system.

Reti: Yes. Wow, that is a very depressing story. And I refer readers to Sam Farr's oral history for some background on how we got to FORA, which is quite in depth. They read well together.

Blumenthal: I think Sam was well meaning in all of this.

Reti: Oh, absolutely.

Blumenthal: There's no question about that. I think this is one of his major disappointments that not more— I mean, I think he can be proud of CSUMB. I think they did what everyone hoped they would do.

I might also add that our relationship with CSUMB has been variable.

But Dianne Harrison had just come in as president, soon after I became chancellor. I didn't really know her predecessor, who apparently was very unpopular and not well-

liked. But Dianne, I thought, was really good. She and I developed a good working relationship. I was very supportive of her. In fact, I invited her, I'll tell you more about it later, but I invited her to this conference in London that I was invited to speak at. I was very impressed with her. She's now, of course, the president of Cal State Northridge. We had a very good relationship and we really talked about ways of cooperating. I think one of the things we did when she was there is we transferred the Science Illustration program to CSU, which we talked about earlier. They wanted it; we wanted to get rid of it. It was perfect. It was easy to do, because we worked so well together.

Toward a More Sustainable Campus

Reti: So let's talk about sustainability.

Blumenthal: Sustainability. I'm really pleased to talk about sustainability because to me this is one of the key aspects of our campus. We've always been known for sustainability, for our student interest in sustainability. And frankly, many of the big initiatives on campus on sustainability have really been student-driven, or student-run. To me, that's almost a point of pride that the students have taken the initiative on that. I think it's really important to acknowledge that and remember that.

But from day one, I've always been interested in this issue of a sustainable campus. When I started, the sustainability office was really small. It was like one or two people. In fact, our first sustainability director was somebody who was very talented but she basically took that job when she got her degree in Santa Cruz. So she was not experienced. She was very good. She's gone on to a fine career. I've periodically heard from her. But we started really small and now today we have a substantial number of staff in the office. It's expanded dramatically. There's far more space. It has quite a number of staff and lots of students, scores of students who actually work out of that office. So it's really expanded a

lot. I'd love to take credit for everything good that happens, but I think it's mostly due to the leadership. We've had three leaders in the sustainability office since I've been chancellor and I think they've all been excellent. I want to acknowledge that.

Their office has done many things. One of the things it does is every few years it does a campus sustainability plan, which is an opportunity for the campus to think about what is important to us, what can we accomplish, and how fast can we accomplish it, and what are we interested in doing? Students have a huge role to play in helping to put together that plan. So again, student leadership is really important there.

I try to keep my fingers in the sustainability issues. I do meet on a regular basis with the sustainability folks. I've spoken twice at the systemwide sustainability conference, once was in Santa Barbara and one was in Southern California a few years ago. But I really tried to raise that level of involvement, and the efforts underway at UC Santa Cruz.

And I wanted there to be some visible outcomes of our efforts on sustainability. One of the obvious things to do, and it's been kind of obvious to me from the beginning, was solar energy. I was so naïve about how hard that was going to be. So naïve. Of course, there are issues of connecting solar cells to the electric grid. But those are issues we've been dealing with. In engineering, they did a great project on the wharf where they did a micro-grid that involved solar and wind energy and how you connect them all together. So that's something that we have the ability on campus to do and even to be creative about.

The first solar project I wanted us to do that was to put solar cells on the West Field House. It's located in a good area for it, a good microclimate for it, etcetera. So we devoted a fair amount of time to planning that project. I was prepared to put some significant resources into it. It turned out we couldn't do it. You know, I always thought if you want to put solar cells on a roof, you put solar cells on a roof. But it turns out, at least at the university,

you've got to worry about how strong the roof is. There are standards you have to meet. And when all the smoke cleared, and all was said and done, the only way we could have done it on the West Field House would have been to replace their brand-new roof with yet another one. That just didn't seem viable. So we wasted a lot of time and effort trying to do something that I thought was simple.

So then we turned to the library, because the library was being built, and we would have some control over what their roof would be. That we could do. That was our first demonstration project. We felt really good that we were doing the library at that time. But still, the library project was still pretty small potatoes for our campus, kind of embarrassingly small, considering how well known we are for sustainability.

Reti: Right. (laughs)

Blumenthal: So the next project we decided on, and I really strongly supported, was the East Remote parking project, which is going on now.

Reti: This summer.

Blumenthal: That's a much bigger project. That will supply a significant chunk of our campus electric energy, not nearly as much as we need, but still enough to put us in the same ballpark as other campuses. I really like that project. That also took a long time to do planning for. It's a big deal, especially when you mess with parking. It turned out it was delayed because of Student Housing West. We strained our planning folks to the max. We were doing Student Housing West, which was the first of its kind; Kresge College, we've never rebuilt a college like that. We're doing that all at the same time. And then on top of that, the electric project in the East Remote lot.

And then, unbeknownst to me, they decided to delay it because of the Student Housing West controversy. Their feeling was, I think, that we can only stand so many controversies at once. I actually had to step in and insist that we do it. So I basically, once I found out it had been halted, I insisted we restart. I did it for two reasons. One was I thought we had to get something done.

Reti: Right! (laughs)

Blumenthal: And number two, I didn't want the East Remote parking to be on the table for conversion to housing.

Reti: Oh!

Blumenthal: Because I knew that the opponents of the meadow were going to look far and wide and the East Remote parking was an obvious place for them to look. So I wanted to take that off the table. I think you can't displace a parking lot that size on a campus like ours.

Reti: I can't imagine. I mean, it would be a nightmare.

Blumenthal: But if you really believe that the meadow preservation transcends all other issues, then that's a nightmare you might want to live with.

Reti: Very interesting.

Blumenthal: The better reason was that I wanted to get it done. So I am pleased that we're finally doing that.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the UC president came up a few years ago with her carbon neutral plan for the campuses, that the campus would reach carbon neutrality in 2025. And I've got news for you: 2025 is coming up pretty fast. I think it's always great for

presidents and leaders to say, “We’ve got these great goals, and we’re going to achieve our great goals sometime after I leave office.”

Reti: (laughs) Right.

Blumenthal: I understand symbolism, but I was not wildly enthusiastic about the president’s plan, not that I don’t think carbon neutrality’s important, because I do. And not because I don’t think symbolism is important, because I do. I just feared that in a difficult financial time, that this goal was a constraint on us that would be difficult to achieve and probably expensive to achieve. But of course, there’s always ambiguity—what counts, and what doesn’t count. That annoys me as well because it seems to me that we’re playing games. It seems to me that if you’re looking for symbolic victories, doing that by playing games can impede your progress because people will figure it out if you’re playing games. And there’s ambiguity. What do you count toward carbon neutrality? They came up with some stuff they don’t count. They don’t count, for example, air travel. They don’t count trips to and from campus. Well, the campus can’t control that. I’m just telling you that these are issues which I think are real world issues. The number of carbon atoms going into the atmosphere is dependent on those things, but those aren’t necessarily included in the president’s initiative.

Reti: That’s important for people to understand.

Blumenthal: I want to acknowledge Dan Press,⁴⁴⁵ who advised me on sustainability issues for a few years. He really did a great job, literally taking me from Carbon Neutrality 101 to a more advanced set of understandings. I think Dan enjoyed it, too, because I pushed back on some issues. I came to understand that some things weren’t well-defined, like the carbon footprint of an airplane ride. At least when Dan and I were talking, those numbers, I thought, were completely suspect. I think they’ve probably improved it since.

Reti: Suspect, in the sense that they exaggerated the impact?

Blumenthal: No, they were too naïve. If you think about an airplane ride, you burn carbon based upon a number of factors, for example, the weight of the plane, which depends on its occupancy, the type of takeoff and landing, which are very expensive, and the duration, altitude, and headwinds of the trip. But for example, the carbon burn is not proportional to the distance. A flight to LA does not burn a tenth of a flight to Hawaii, even if it's ten times longer to Hawaii, because you burn so much of your carbon at takeoff and landing. So when you look at—at least back five, six, seven, eight years ago—when you were looking at carbon calculators, I felt that they were completely inaccurate. It might be much better now. I have not kept up with the technology.

Reti: Okay.

Blumenthal: But Dan educated me in all those issues. The other issue he educated me on was the campus go-generation plant, and I need to say a comment or two about that. We always had a co-generation plant. I'll point out to you that the steadiness of electrical power to the UC campus has been—(Reti laughs) Well, you laugh. It has been a joke.

Reti: I've been here a long time.

Blumenthal: You know, when computers first came in, PCs, and desktop workstations, I remember getting one of these little devices that monitor the steadiness of power and kind of made sure you didn't have power surges. The one I got clicked every time there was a change in the power. And I couldn't keep it because it clicked so frequently in my office that it was a distraction because the power was all over the place. It's gotten better since those days, but it still is not as good as most places.

The campus has this co-generation plant which largely served as an emergency power source for Science Hill when the power went out because we have labs and lab animals that need power for refrigeration, for air conditioning, whatever. We have experiments that are in progress, or if they were to cease in the middle, it would cost months of somebody's work. We have samples, that if not refrigerated, would be destroyed. So there's a real need for continuous power in Physical and Biological Sciences. And that's what cogen did. The co-gen plant I inherited had been on campus for decades and decades. It was so old that it hadn't been made in years.

Reti: Hadn't been made in years?

Blumenthal: I mean the brand, whatever it was, hadn't been—

Reti: Oh, the technology.

Blumenthal: Not just the technology, I think the company was long gone.

Reti: Oh, okay.

Blumenthal: And whenever something broke, they actually had to have somebody machine the parts from scratch, because there were no off-the-shelf replacement parts. So it was very expensive to maintain. And it was a gas guzzler—actually a diesel guzzler, I guess. But it was extremely costly in terms of fuel and carbon footprint.

So we made a decision that, even though we couldn't get money from the state to do it, we made a decision to commit campus resources to putting in a new co-gen plant, which we did. The good news is that we bought a modern co-gen plant, which is much more efficient. We used it to generate some of the power on campus as well. And it served as a good—not perfect, but good—buffer for large power outages on campus in terms of the needs of the laboratories on campus. So all of that is good. However, the bad is that even

though it's a modern co-gen plant, it still has very significant carbon footprint. As we approach this 2025 date, this will be one of the major contributors to the carbon footprint of UCSC. So the co-gen plant is one of those damned if you do, damned if you don't kind of things.

Reti: That's ironic.

Blumenthal: We're doing better with the modern plant. But still, the mere existence of a co-gen plant is intrinsically not good, because it does burn carbon. Now, of course, you can get around burning carbon if you use biofuels. So there are efforts, and Santa Cruz as a campus and me as a chancellor—have been strongly supportive of university efforts to increase our systemwide purchases of biofuels. If we are going to achieve carbon neutrality, that's going to be a necessity because things like co-gen are just plain going to have to continue for a long time.

There are one or two campuses that use batteries instead of co-generation plants. I don't think we're in a position yet to even consider doing something like that. Of course, we have been helped by the UC purchase of solar, I guess in the Central Valley. We do have a piece of them. In other words, some fraction of their output does go to UC Santa Cruz and therefore contributes to our electrical budget, and therefore, is carbon-free. I want to acknowledge that we have that significant help from the system. But at the end of the day, it isn't hard to do the calculations and see what pathway we're on and where we're going to be in 2025. And the answer is, the only way we will be able to achieve carbon neutrality is to buy offsets. There's some disagreements now about the buying of offsets. Probably the person in the administration who has thought the most about this is Peggy Delaney, who's on the systemwide committee. Peggy is much more positive about offsets. She feels that there are some real benefits to doing that. I'm more skeptical for two reasons. One is

that offsets are just that, they're offsets. You're not really doing it. You're just paying someone else to do it. That doesn't feel very pure to me, as a matter of principle. The second reason I have concerns is because we're paying anything. We're financially strapped and why does it make sense—much as I love this idea of carbon neutrality—why does it make sense for us to use some of our scarce resources that should be going toward educating students toward buying this symbolic victory?

Reti: Yeah. I see what you're saying.

Blumenthal: So much as I'm committed to sustainability, I'm much more skeptical about the advantages of buying offsets to achieve it. And we won't be the only campus that does that.

Reti: And where would that money have to come from?

Blumenthal: It comes from classes; it comes from the library—

Reti: Oh. So it's not like UCOP is going to specially budget money for offsets for each campus, or that the legislature's going to give money.

Blumenthal: No. Well, if the legislature gave money, great. But that's not going to happen. In terms of UCOP budgeting money, UCOP essentially gives all their money to the campuses already. If they mandate that we do this, then it's an unfunded mandate. So we may end up doing it. We may end up even liking that we're doing it. And again, it comes down to how much. If we're talking a couple hundred thousand dollars, that's not so bad. My fear is that we're talking about a couple million dollars at some point, which I think would be bad. So it's a matter of degree. I have this symbolic issue, but maybe I'm being too fastidious.

Reti: In the carbon offsets, do planting trees or other kinds of carbon farming get counted? Like the CASFS program, or anything about reforestation of lands?

Blumenthal: I honestly don't know the answer to that question. It should be counted. I think everything should count.

Reti: So we can certainly point people toward some documents.

Blumenthal: Yeah. But in terms of reforestation, the question is, did you do it to create a greater sink for carbon, or is that something you would have done anyway? Because if you have some land that's been clear cut for some reason in the past, and then you reforest it, maybe you would have done that anyway. So maybe that's part of the natural reforestation anyway, in which case it shouldn't count for being a carbon neutrality contributor. So again, there's ambiguities here. I would much prefer to have more limited goals, but have them be clear cut and unambiguous, with no arguments. Because otherwise, somebody's going to come along and pooh-pooh what you did. But that's me. You know, in a sense, I had my chance. (Reti laughs)

All right. So let's talk about waste. So five, maybe closer to seven years ago, we had a big initiative on waste on campus, which kind of was something I wanted to do, for a year-long initiative. I thought it went well. I was very pleased about it. This was what allowed us to actually eliminate plastic bottles. I was appalled when at graduation that year, or at least at several of the graduations they had bottled water on the stage. So I made a point of bringing a water bottle with me when I marched up to the stage. We basically eliminated water bottles. We did a big deal on battery recycling and disposal, teaching people that batteries needed to be disposed of properly. We did a big push on recycling, which was very successful. To me, the campaign was a great success. I was very, very pleased with it. I think the sustainability office did a great job.

My only complaint is, really pointing at myself more than anyone else, is that we didn't repeat it. If I had it to do all over again, I would have done one major initiative every year. At the time I was persuaded that we needed to wait a year and let things calm down a little bit. I'm sorry I did that. I wish we had just chosen one a year and kept it going because by the time a year passed, I was onto other things and never got back to this. I think it would have been better for us as a campus had I stuck with it. So I view it as a mistake that I didn't insist that we continue this.

The other thing I want to say about the sustainability office is the level of improvement that there's been in connecting the sustainability office with the curriculum on campus. When I first came in as chancellor, that was a question I kept asking: how connected are we between what we do for sustainability and what we teach about sustainability? I was struck at the complete lack of connectedness between those two things. "Complete" may be too strong a word, but it was generally disconnected. Faculty would offer courses on sustainability; the sustainability office would have various projects. And they sometimes weren't at all related to one another. I felt that this was a problem—that we needed to be better coordinated. I did a serious evaluation of the question of where should the sustainability office reside. It resides now under Business and Administrative services, under Sarah Latham. In fact, it's always resided there.

But I really wondered, because of my concern about the academic mission and trying to connect sustainability to academics, whether it should be connected to something much more academic. I considered alternative places to let it be. Should it be a dean's purview? That seemed undesirable, because I didn't want just one dean to have sustainability under their purview. What about the provost's office? Well, our provost had a lot of things reporting to her. I was really reluctant to add more to her work. In fact, if anything, I had too many things reporting to the provost. I think that would be a fair statement. So adding

one more made no sense. Then I thought of maybe the vice provost of academic affairs. But again, that's a little bit out of the normal realm of the vice provost of academic affairs. So I really thought seriously. And then I thought, what about the chancellor's office? We could do sustainability in the chancellor's office. But I was trying to have a minimum of infrastructure directly in the chancellor's office, so moving sustainability there was inconsistent with that kind of philosophy.

And then, on top of all of that, many of the projects that the sustainability office was doing really related so closely to what was going on in BAS, and needed BAS oversight. So after a lot of thoughts and a lot of discussion with a lot of people, I ended up doing nothing. But I don't actually regard it as nothing, because I really did seriously consider, and was willing to move them elsewhere. Another factor was Vice Chancellor Sarah Latham, who has been really attuned to the academic mission of the university even though her purview does not include academics.

Reti: What about integrating them with environmental studies, or the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems?

Blumenthal: So with regard to CASFS, this was still fairly early in my chancellorship. I'm not sure CASFS was quite as strong as it is today.

Reti: CASFS went through a period of crisis right about that time.

Blumenthal: Yeah. So I'm not sure that would have been—with regard to, what was your other suggestion?

Reti: Environmental studies, or environmental science.

Blumenthal: We could have done that. But again, environmental studies is a department and this was a major campus-wide effort. I didn't want this just to be an

environmental studies thing. I wanted it to be a campus thing. That symbolism was important to me. Today I think things have changed. I think they've changed for the better. I've talked to sustainability folks a lot about that. Is it perfect? No. They do not live in an academic unit. But they have done surveys of the campus. They've created lists of all of the courses that relate to sustainability. They've done surveys of the deans of what courses and what parts of the curriculum relate to sustainability. They've done the outreach to do that. I don't think any of the academic units would have necessarily done it as carefully as they have done it. So I think we're doing better on that. I think we're seeing a lot more interaction today between faculty and the sustainability office than we ever have before, much more interaction. Not everyone. There are faculty who are involved in sustainability who don't work with the sustainability office, but I think it's much better than it used to be. I think those things have mitigated some of the issues that I saw those years ago, but it will take constant effort to keep the sustainability office in touch with the academic mission.

Reti: You've not talked about Students of Color Sustainability Collective.

Blumenthal: This was started a few years ago. It was the sustainability office and Sarah Latham that thought about this. They noticed, and in fact I noticed as well, that the vast majority of the students that were involved in sustainability efforts were not students of color. We can come up with all kinds of theories for why that might be, but that was a fact. So it wasn't really reaching out or resonating with a significant fraction of our student population, which is increasingly students of color.

So that's why we started this group called the Students of Color Sustainability Collective, with the idea that students of color may come from families that have sustainability practices which are outside of the mainstream of what we're used to, and they could bring

to the table some of those practices and contribute to the campus in that way. We've had a number of students find that interesting and appealing, so I think that that has been a good thing to do. It's been fairly successful. I think it was a very innovative way of thinking about the issue. I want to give them credit for having brought that to the fore.

Reti: And did the impetus come from students, or from Sarah Latham and her crew?

Blumenthal: It came from Sarah, and from the director of the sustainability office. I think they talked to students. It ultimately came from them, from their noticing the absence of color among students involved with sustainability.

Reti: It's a big issue.

Reti: So today is Friday, July 26. It's 2019. This is Irene Reti and I am here with Chancellor Emeritus George Blumenthal for our fortieth session of the oral history we're doing together. So today, George, we're going to continue by talking about internationalism, how the campus is connected to the international academic community.

UCSC and the Wider International Academic Community

Blumenthal: Okay, so when I came in as chancellor, one of the things that was kind of obvious was that we as a campus didn't have a really well-defined program on international relations with other universities, or with other countries. It was really rudimentary. And in fact, I was surprised to learn that all international stuff was just handled by the vice provost for undergraduate education, in that case, Bill Ladusaw. This made no sense to me. I asked Bill about it and Bill kind of said, "Well, at a certain point, Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood said we've got to do this," and looked around the room, and pointed at him.

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: That's kind of how it happened. It wasn't a systematic decision. And so all agreements that were signed with foreign universities went through Bill, or through the vice provost for undergraduate education, which wasn't a terrible thing. But we really didn't have a senior manager, or somebody at a very senior policy level with purview over research or graduate education involved.

The other thing that we didn't do, which I think was really crucial, is to have a connection between what we were doing at a campus level and what the faculty themselves were doing. I'll come back to this point later, but just as a matter of general sensibleness, it seems to me that the faculty are really crucial. Research agreements are all done through faculty. A lot of graduate programs are done through faculty collaborations. And for undergraduates, yes there can be campus involvement in setting up undergraduate exchanges and the like. But ultimately, faculty do need to be involved because they're the ones that offer the curriculum and offer whatever courses are there. So there was a real disconnect. I recognized that soon after taking office. I can't say that we really handled it as well as we should have or could have, but at least we recognized the problem.

The one advantage that we had, and I think particularly have today, is that we have a very strong staff in our international office. They're really good. They know their stuff, and they know what they're doing. We do have our own campus exchanges with many universities and those are run out of our international office.

And so every now and then at first, when I first became chancellor—and I didn't pay a lot of attention at first—but every now and then somebody would say, "Well, we just negotiated this agreement with another university and here's the papers for you to sign." Or, "Somebody's coming to campus and they're going to sign these papers." I would just do it. It was all well and good. Usually those agreements with other universities were

written on fancy-looking paper, with fancy signatures, and pictures of shaking hands, but they really meant nothing. They didn't promise anything. They didn't commit to anything. They were just a statement that we were going to develop blah, blah, blah. Not that that's bad, but it's kind of meaningless.

Reti: So just to be more specific, the kinds of endeavors that they would be signing agreements about would be about collaborative research?

Blumenthal: Well, they might about collaborative research, but most of the agreements in the early years that I signed had only to do with university such and such, and UC Santa Cruz agrees that we will work together to our mutual benefit and develop programs together, etcetera. It would be very general. Occasionally there would be some agreement that was much more specific about some research area. That usually was faculty-driven if that happened. So driven from on top, the generalities. It's only if it's related to a specific program that you really get into nitty gritty and I think meaningful agreements.

Things went that way for a while. An early one that really impressed me and really got me thinking a lot was an agreement that we signed with the autonomous universities of Mexico. The key person there was a graduate of UCSC who became the president of one of those universities. It's Francisco Rosaldo-May.⁴⁴⁶ He was a really good guy. He's now retired from the position. But he really impressed upon me the importance of these universities for the future of Mexico. And of course, his main contact was one of his former professors—he was one of Steve Gliessman's former students.⁴⁴⁷ That one was actually quite meaningful to me because it seemed to me that it had all of the right elements. It was several universities. It was something where UC Santa Cruz could make a big difference. I mean, it's one thing for us to make an agreement with a university that has agreements with Berkeley, UCLA, etcetera, etcetera. We're just one more, and a relatively

minor addition. But we were a big deal to them. Steve had been so crucial in their development. So that really struck me. It struck me that there were actual programs going on in collaboration. So that really showed me a way that we might be able to do more in the future. I thought that was really good.

But the question kept arising: how do we institutionalize efforts to be more international—whether it be research efforts or attracting new students, or however we do it. Where should this live within the campus as the main place that does it? I mean, yes, we have a good international office. The head of the international office was really good, but she doesn't have the gravitas to push an agenda through the deans and the vice chancellors, etcetera.

So we took two routes simultaneously. I think the first one I started when we were already talking about the second one. And I did consult a lot with the Academic Senate along the way, which was both very helpful and very frustrating. It was very helpful because I would say that faculty on campus, and the senate in general, really wanted to torque up our international efforts and collaborations. So I think the will was very much there. And the senate has a committee on international stuff. So all of that was a natural. Naturally, the senate had many ideas of how we might do it. I always was struck by, one, the need sometimes to establish a new office or a new position, but I was also feeling caution and reluctance (maybe we call it innate conservatism), but whatever it was, the caution about creating yet more positions and making the administration top-heavy, especially as we were going into the great recession. And it just didn't make sense to me in a great recession to add another vice chancellor or vice provost, a member of the senior leadership group.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: So those were kind of the two competing factors there for me, anyway. I was trying to be very, very cautious. But the senate really did want somebody in charge. But in the meantime, before we actually finalized anything, I made a decision to bring on a special assistant to the chancellor, Anu Luther, who had been the president of our foundation board, mainly because Anu had outstanding connections all around the world. Not only herself, but her husband as well, is internationally famous. So they literally have connections all around the world. In some countries particularly, like India, of course. I mean, she knew the prime minister of India quite well. So it seemed like this was a good way to start the ball rolling.

And, in fact, it turned out to be true. Anu did this role for me for two years. She made many connections that we could never have been able to make otherwise, frankly, in a number of countries. I got to talk over those two years to a lot of really important people—politicians, academic leaders, people interested in doing things. But the fundamental issue was, that it's one thing to talk to the chancellor. It's another thing to involve the faculty. I can say this is great and that's great, and the other thing is great, but at a certain point, there have to be faculty willing do this. And our faculty were somewhat, (maybe they still are), somewhat disjointed. There were a lot of faculty doing great work abroad with real collaborations—many, many such faculty. I mean, the dinner last night was Gail Hershatter, most of whose career was spent in China. She does wonderful, wonderful work. In fact, I saw Gail in China when I was there. We have faculty who do great work, but unfortunately, it isn't organized as well as it could be.

I thought there were some real possibilities, but the truth is, working through a special assistant, I felt didn't provide enough potential for sustainable follow-up and it was follow-up that was needed. I could go meet people. I'm a genial person. I can form relationships. I can say, "Let's work together," and everyone can agree and it can be all

kumbaya. But somebody has to go and do the nitty-gritty work to make it happen. Anu was not in a position to do that because she wasn't a member of the faculty. She was in a temporary position as a special assistant. To the extent that I wanted her to open doors, that's exactly what she did. I think she did an excellent job. We had lots of ideas coming from Anu. No lack of ideas. But the problem is, we as a campus needed to do follow-up. It was clear that we needed to do something. So we finally established a vice-provost of international initiatives. I'm not sure if that was the official name, something like that was the title.

Reti: I can look it up.

Blumenthal: And the idea was to have someone at the vice-provost level, someone who was well-connected to the administration, to the academic administration of the campus; someone who could reach out to faculty. The international office would report to that position. We thought that that would work well. And it didn't.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, darn.

Blumenthal: I'm still not at all convinced that it was a bad idea. I just don't think we put the right person in that position. We put somebody good, but not someone who had the energy and the drive and the follow-through to make stuff really happen. A good person, but not necessarily the right fit. On the other hand, we didn't have a lot of choices in terms of who was interested in the position at the time.

So I would characterize that office as largely a failure over those two years. It didn't take enough initiative. There wasn't enough synergy with the faculty and there really wasn't enough follow-up. Even when I opened some doors, somehow those doors wouldn't get walked through, if you know what I mean. So it wasn't a very successful situation. And ultimately that person resigned and we ironically came full circle and decided to reassign

those duties to our vice provost for undergraduate education, to Richard Hughey, and made that part of his responsibilities on a temporary basis, while we took a few deep breaths to decide what we were going to do, while we consulted more with the senate about pathways forward. That's kind of where we are. Last year I was reluctant to make a final decision, since I felt we're getting a new chancellor, I'd let her grapple with this issue. And all of this was taking place at the same time that we were scrambling to increase our international student body. We're now at about 11 percent undergraduates from outside of California. I don't remember the detailed numbers, but it's roughly 50/50 from other countries versus other states. It might be 60/40. We really did a lot to increase our international presence among our student body. And that's not easy. We didn't have the reputation of a UCLA or a San Diego, where all they have to do is snap their fingers and the applicants come. Well, we got plenty of applications, but in terms of people enrolling, that was another issue. Still I'm pleased that we got to where we are today. I think that is a big success. But in a way, I don't see that as completely distinct from all the efforts they have with collaborative programs involved at the research or graduate level. I think the two feed on each other and you can't think of them independently.

Oh, and so the last thing that we did, what we started doing last year—and I'm very hopeful for this—the ACE, the American Council on Education, has a program that they run on internationalization, where they work with groups of campuses, to share experiences, share best practices, critique approaches to international efforts. And so we decided to join. About a year ago, we decided to join this ACE international effort. I think it's probably too early to declare it a great success, but it has brought in a level of expertise to us that we didn't have internally.

Reti: Yes. Right. And try to invent everything yourself.

Blumenthal: That's right. So I'm hopeful that that will pay great dividends to us. We've been doing that now for about a year.

International Trips

So now, with that backdrop, I thought I'd talk a little bit about some of the trips I took as chancellor. A few comments. I really didn't travel all that much abroad as chancellor. In thirteen years, I didn't take that many trips. I did get a bunch of invitations, which I turned down. Arguably, I'm not the biggest traveler in the world. I go where I'm supposed to go and when I'm supposed to do it. But I did do a number of trips abroad. All of these trips were intended to increase the university's presence. I'll mention some of them.

One of the early trips I took was to London. I think that was in 2009. And the reason I think it was in 2009 was because that's when the great recession was really going strong. I was invited to London to give a talk to a group of vice chancellors. And remember in England, vice chancellors is the same as a chancellor or president here.

Reti: Oh. I did not know that.

Blumenthal: Yes. The British vice chancellor is the equivalent of me.

Reti: Huh. Because I thought we got the name "chancellor" from Britain.

Blumenthal: Well, there is a chancellor at universities, but it's a titular head. It might be a politician or some lord somebody or other. But they don't have anything to do with running the university. I don't claim to understand it, but that's the reality.

So, what they wanted me to talk about was the Master Plan, and about how UC has responded to the recession. They also wanted to have a talk from somebody from the CSU as well to talk about that. I persuaded them to invite Dianne Harrison from CSUMB. She

was then at CSUMB as the president. I thought she would be a good choice and she was quite grateful that I did that. So she was there with her daughter.

A person I worked with over there to arrange things was actually none other than Jodi Anderson, who had been the student regent when I was the chair of the senate. Jodi and I were the ones that worked on the staff advisory issue. Jodi and I had become friends. She had written to me and that's how this all got started. So it was great to reconnect with her. She had just gotten married and she was living in London semi-permanently and working for this group of universities in England.

The reason that they were having me and Dianne over and having this meeting was because they anticipated that they would be doing deep cuts in higher education. So they thought they might be able to learn something from the experiences of UC and CSU, which I thought was actually quite foresightful because literally a few months after we gave our talks, Britain decided to impose deep cuts in their support for higher education, and huge increases in tuition. So very analogous to what we did in California. So in fact, it was prescient to have this meeting to discuss these issues.

They had government officials there. I remember the guy who was the minister of education, named Lord David Willets,⁴⁴⁸ whose nickname was Two Brain. When I mention this to people in England, they know exactly, they can remember exactly what his name is.

Reti: Naturally. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Very smart guy. It was a conservative government, but he was a very smart guy. He came to the talk. I remember having a very interesting and worthwhile conversation with him. It was a nice visit for me personally. One of the cool things was one of the people who arranged this meeting was from parliament. So he took me to

parliament and gave me an insider's tour of parliament. So I got to go and tour the parliament building. It was kind of cool.

Reti: Cool. So in terms of what you were talking about on your visit—were there changes that UC was making to address the budget situation and that UCSC was making specifically that you were able to tell them about?

Blumenthal: I talked about the fact that at a macro scale, with deep cuts, you have to have tuition increases. And that at least in the case of UC, it was only at best a partial mitigation, not even that big a partial mitigation. But everyone was going to have to do deep cuts, including us. We did have reserves, but our cuts weren't covered by reserves; they weren't that many. So you have to balance your budget, or come close to balancing your budget.

And I pointed out that Santa Cruz, under the leadership of M.R.C. Greenwood and John Simpson, had some years earlier done a massive reorganization of the campus, where they'd consolidated all of the service centers; they'd consolidated IT. They'd done major consolidations, with the intention of saving money. Those consolidations at the end of the day actually saved no money, but that what they did is they prevented the future growth of the expenses. That was a very worthwhile thing to do, but not for the reasons that they were advertised for doing it. I said that this was something that several campuses were doing around the entire UC system. I know that Dick Blum on the regents was calling all the chancellors, saying, "You need to redo your business practices." And I kept saying to him, "We already did it. This is done." M.R.C. knew that this was a small campus. We couldn't survive unless we were as efficient as possible. We had already done basically most of everything that we could do. But again, that's only a way of preventing future issues. Ultimately, I talked about how we could make cuts, and how difficult it was, and

how we really tried to make sure that our cuts involved not filling staff positions that were vacant and not filling faculty positions that went vacant. However, such cuts run the danger of skewing the academic mission of the campus because retirements or departures aren't evenly spread across campus, so that puts an additional strain on certain areas of the campus.

Reti: And in England, these are public universities, publicly supported?

Blumenthal: Yes. But it was devastating. I don't know if you remember, there were demonstrations on the streets of England for literally months over this.

Reti: Yes. I do remember that.

Blumenthal: So it was an interesting time and to the extent that I helped at all, I'm really pleased. I don't know whether I helped.

Reti: And did you stay in touch with any of those people that you spoke with?

Blumenthal: A little bit. For a while. Kind of pleasant. But they were going through tough times and several of them didn't stay.

Reti: Yes. And now we have Brexit and God knows what's going on.⁴⁴⁹

Blumenthal: Yeah. Now with Brexit, it's crazy. Totally crazy. My fear is things will get really bad there.

Reti: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Blumenthal: So, that was England.

There were some other trips. I'm sure there were others that I forgot. One I just remembered was another trip to Israel. I talked about the one with Yudof. But I also went

to Israel to celebrate the sixtieth birthday of my colleague Avishai Dekel, his sixtieth celebration, which is frequent in science. It's a scientific celebration of his life's work. So they did that and I was the master of ceremonies. It was all very nice. But while I was there, I got a note that the president of the university wanted to see me. So I went and talked to the president about collaborations—

Reti: Which university are we talking about?

Blumenthal: Hebrew University. I'm sorry. Thank you.

It was a different president than I had met before. So I did that. That was useful. There were still lingering issues about UC and Israel because UC had cut off Education Abroad for a period of time.

So the next—

Reti: Russia?

Blumenthal: Oh, yeah, Russia. That was interesting. So I kind of out of the blue got an invitation to go to a big conference in Russia and give the plenary address there about successful new universities.

Reti: (laughs) As in under fifty?

Blumenthal: Being under fifty kind of made us a new university.

Reti: I know, yeah. I was wondering how they categorize that.

Blumenthal: But I think what really sparked their interest in us was our number two position on the citations list. And so it was motivated, because at the time (it may still even be true today, I don't know) but at the time, there were no Russian universities

among the top 100 universities in the world. So Vladimir Putin decided that he wanted to have an initiative that by the year, I forget what year, 2020, 2025—I don't remember what year—he wanted there to be five Russian universities in the top 100 list. So that was going to be a major Russian initiative. So some of the meeting was about how you rate universities; what are the factors? So they brought in the people from the Shanghai rankings, the Times New London rankings, etcetera, to give talks. But I gave a talk about UC Santa Cruz and how UC Santa Cruz was able to develop in our fifty years. It was very, very well received.

Then after the talk, they took a couple of us who were participants, and we met with officials of the Putin administration, I think the minister of education and several other people. They basically sat us down in a row and they said to us, “We have a goal of achieving five universities in the top 100. And we would really appreciate hearing from you how we might achieve that goal.”

It was kind of a surreal conversation. I don't think I came across very well because everyone else kind of tried to be helpful and said, “Do this, or do that, or do the other thing.” My reaction was two-fold. One, I argued that this was really going to be hard for Russia to do, because first of all, at least in the sciences, most of the top scientists weren't really at universities. They were at academies. And so if you can't count them among your top faculty, you're going to get screwed in the rankings. If they wanted to do this, they were going to have to have a closer relationship between the academies and universities in such a way that the top scholars would be counted.

I said the second reason was that they had lost a generation when the Berlin Wall went down. I can't speak to every field of study, but certainly it's true that in physics and astronomy, the very best Russians, almost without exception, went West, certainly below

a certain age. In astrophysics, my field, there's only one person I can think of who I would call among the top-notch superstars in Russia, who didn't go abroad. That was my colleague Rashid Sanyaev.⁴⁵⁰ Rashid actually ended up spending half time in Germany and half time in Russia, but kept his Russian affiliation. But Rashid's wife is a physician, and so her practice was there and they have a child whom I believe has hemophilia. So they felt most comfortable about the medical situation in Russia. Rashid is the guy, I may have mentioned him to you before—

Reti: You did. Yes.

Blumenthal: And Rashid and I were already friends by the time of this, and we had written some papers together. But by and large, all of the great cosmologists below fifty, basically, had left Russia. I think that was true across many fields. It was going to take a generation to replace them.

So my reaction was: Russia's a big country. It's a huge country. You have lots of students to educate. Instead of worrying about this ranking, why don't you try to focus your goal on providing the best possible education, or range of education, for your students, because as a country, that will do the most for you economically. They had absolutely no interest in hearing that. Zero interest. You could see their eyes glaze over when I talked. Putin had said he wanted five universities, and they were damn well going to get him five universities. So, that was that discussion.

Reti: Interesting.

Blumenthal: I think they were not real pleased with me. They probably regretted inviting me. But I was honest with them. I told them what I thought, rather than what they wanted to hear.

UC Santa Cruz's Research Impact

Reti: Right. And just as sort of a fill-in thing, because I don't know that we've explicitly talked about this. UCSC is number two in the—

Blumenthal: In what's called research impact. Research impact is a measure of the number of citations per publication by our faculty. It's amazing. We were number two in the world.

Reti: That's phenomenal.

Blumenthal: We've been steadily in the top five for probably the last seven or eight or nine years now. And we fluctuate between number two, three and five, or whatever. But we're up there with MIT, Stanford, and Princeton.⁴⁵¹

Reti: To what do you attribute that success?

Blumenthal: I attribute that success to the fact that we have faculty who are breaking new grounds in new fields, or establishing new fields, and who have really changed the face of their subject matter, and therefore they're cited all the time. Now it's also true that if you look at it in detail—there's good news and bad news. The bad news is that if you look at our citation numbers, a huge chunk of them come from a relatively small number of faculty. People like David Haussler and Sandy Faber account for a large fraction of our citations.

On the other hand, the good news is that the next level down does pretty damn well, and there's quite a number of those. So without David and Sandy, we wouldn't be up at where we are. It's a small number. But that is one of the UCSC claims to fame: how important we are in terms of citations.

And of course I did a tour there. They were very nice. They gave me a tour of Moscow. So I spent a day just touring Moscow, and then came home, somewhat to Kelly's irritation, because she wanted to come with me and go to Saint Petersburg. But I told her, "I've got four days in Russia. However you want to tour a large country in two days." (laughs

Reti: That's a big place.

Blumenthal: So she didn't come. So that was Moscow.⁴⁵²

And then when Anu [Luther] was there, we went to India. That was actually quite instructive for me in so many ways. Anu arranged dozens of visits with important people. It was quite impressive. University presidents, ministers of this and that. She wanted to arrange a meeting with the prime minister, which I have no doubt she could have done, but the timing was really strange. This was literally a month or two before the election for the prime minister who was kicked out of office and replaced by Modi. I don't think he was corrupt, but he had a lot of corrupt people around him, and so in the end it was clear his days were numbered, politically. It was a strange time in that regard. And Anu was there; Ashish came with, and he was crucial because he could speak Hindi at least. It surprised me how few people among the rank and file in India speak English. I mean, among the educated class, they all speak English. But Hindi is what you need to talk to ordinary people.

India's a strange place. We stayed in a top notch hotel in Delhi on that trip, and going into the hotel's like going into the airport. They search the cars, and you had to go through a metal detector. The hotel was in the diplomatic sector of Delhi, but still, it was clear that Delhi had a real concern about terrorism. And of course, there have been major terrorist attacks in India, including the famous one in Mumbai. So they're very concerned about that.

India's also a place where the difference in wealth, or the difference in economic status between the rich and the poor, is so obvious compared to anywhere else in the world. You can go to downtown New York or downtown San Francisco and see the homeless people in the street. I'm not being unsympathetic, but it is just an order of magnitude different than being in India and going through the poorest neighborhoods where you see the level of poverty at which they live. It's shocking. You go to downtown San Francisco and you walk around, you might see a hundred homeless people. I'm not saying there's only a hundred there, but if you took a walk you might be close to seeing a hundred people. In India, you might see thousands, or tens of thousands as you walk. It's a very different thing. And then, among the richest neighborhoods, people are just amazingly rich—with servants, the finest things. I think the disparity between the top 1 percent and the bottom of the economy is much bigger than the United States, really quite striking.

And on that trip—you know, I knew this was going to be risky, potentially a gamble. It wasn't my ideal thing to follow up on—but one university that was really interested in forming a relationship with Santa Cruz was Punjab State University in Punjab. So I decided to go out there. So we took this trip to the Punjab, which was interesting in and of itself. We met with them. Punjab State University is huge. It's got 300,000 students, 400,000 students—maybe half a million students. It is a gargantuan university. And it isn't a particularly strong university. Its status is probably comparable to a CSU, would be my guess. But what they really wanted to do was within Punjab State University, was to establish a central core, a center of excellence that would be really high quality, basically a UC quality education with graduate programs and the like. They really wanted to do that. And they felt that they could do that best in partnership with an established university.

I thought this might conceivably be a real sweet spot for us, because I don't think Berkeley or UCLA would go there. So we had the mantle of the UC system. And on the other hand, they were really serious. It sounded like they had money. I mean, they talked like they had the money to do this. I talked at length to them about this. And it made sense because they're so huge as a university, so gathering together the money to create a center of excellence is a tiny fraction of their budget. They certainly could do it if financially they wanted to do it.

So we had lots of discussions with them and were somewhat frustrated because they wanted to move at lightning speed, and I wanted to move at a speed that I thought was feasible. (Reti laughs) So we kept going back and forth about issues. We talked endlessly and finally we reached an agreement, which kind of laid out a time scale of who would do what when. So I was very pleased and very excited.

I went back to Delhi, but I didn't have a good feeling when I left. My bullshit meter was starting to rise but I felt that we had to follow through. We had to do this, having said we would do it. And we did. When I returned, we agreed to set up a number of things—some faculty going over there; some faculty input into their development. We did all of it. We did everything we said we would do, and all they had to do was come up with the funding for travel, and a few other things on their end to make it happen for at least step one. And they never did it. It was really no follow-through at all on their side for phase one that we'd agreed to. So it just died.

Reti: What do you think was happening?

Blumenthal: I think this was my first encounter with Indian bureaucracy. I'm not sure what ends it serves them to be so visionary and yet with no follow through. But on the other hand, there's myriad political stuff going on. And I must say, I went back to Delhi

and met with some education officials or administrative people, they were skeptical of this.

So, for whatever it's worth, we tried. Unfortunately, during my chancellorship, I had a number of times where I took an initiative with the idea that maybe it would pay off big. This was one, and it didn't.

Reti: There is a certain amount of risk taking and vision in the position of chancellor.

Blumenthal: Yes.

So that was Delhi. And then we went to Bangalore, to a conference. It was a really interesting conference. Again, I was asked to give one of the main talks there. It was a conference on the humanities in higher education in India. Part of the reason I was there was to talk about a university that had a major impact on the humanities. There were three people from the US, three university presidents who spoke. It was kind of funny. One was me; one was Pradeep Khosla, from San Diego, which also has colleges. And the third was from one of the Claremont Colleges that also has colleges. I spoke last among the three and I had to point out to them that the idea of colleges within a university in the United States is a really rare concept. Because three out of three was—(laughter)

Reti: Did they find that idea of colleges kind of an instructive model for humanities within the university?

Blumenthal: I don't think so. I actually don't think they were all that interested in the colleges. What was really interesting to me was that the majority of people at this conference were scientists and engineers.

Reti: Yeah. And you, obviously, are not a humanities person, although you have an interest in the humanities.

Blumenthal: Khosla isn't, either. He's an engineer. But we're the head of a university, so in that sense, it makes sense. But the nitty-gritty people who were there, who organized the conference and made it work, most of them—not all—but most of them were scientists and engineers. And the reason was—I mean, this is a gross overstatement—but to a large extent in India, people want their children to grow up to be scientists, engineers, computer scientists. And that's what they pressure them to do. So there's relatively little emphasis on humanities issues in society at large. I'm not saying there isn't any. I don't want to overgeneralize. But the feeling was—and part of the main themes of the conference was—that for a university education, there had to be a better grounding in humanities, even for those who are pursuing, let's say, computer science as their career.

Reti: Sure, in the way that a place like MIT does.

Blumenthal: Right.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Well, it's obvious to you and me. But that isn't the society they're in.

So, that was that trip to India. We did a couple of fun things. I was there for two weeks on that trip. So we took one day off and Ashish and I went to the Taj Mahal, which is well worth it. I thought oh, this is going to be a long trip for nothing, but it was an amazing place.

The other thing I did when we had a half a day—also there doing some recruiting for students was Michael McCawley, who used to be our director of admissions.⁴⁵³ I'd known Michael for years, so Michael and I went off to tour, to go through old Delhi, through the old Delhi, as opposed to the New Delhi. We have a great picture of us. Because one of the things we did is we hired a—they have these carts, kind of pulled by a guy on a bicycle.

And so Michael and I rented a cart. (Reti laughs) Michael is probably as tall as I am, and probably at least fifty pounds heavier than I. So there were these two huge people. I remember we asked the driver whether or not he would prefer that we do two carts. He said, “No, no, no, this is fine. No problem.” He took us on this bicycle tour of Old Delhi, although I have to say by the end, he was really struggling.

Reti: Oh, gosh. (laughs) He got his workout that day.

Blumenthal: He got his workout that day. We, of course, tipped him very well.

Reti: Yeah, that’s great. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Okay, the next trip I took was to China. It was my first trip to China. All of my life if you’d asked me what country did I really want to visit, I would have said China. I’d read a lot of Chinese history. I really wanted to go to China. So Ashish and I went to China when I was invited. There’s this conference that takes place with American students in China, where they invite a bunch of students over for a week or two weeks or whatever. And they’re from all over, at least all over UC. There’s hundreds of them. I was invited to give kind of a plenary talk to them at some point along their journey. So I did that.

In China, of course, you need a retinue. You can’t, as a university chancellor or president, go alone. So I went with Ashish. I don't think we had a very large group with us that time. I didn’t really travel. We basically stayed in Beijing. But it was really quite an interesting experience. I gave a talk at the conference and did the stuff there. I visited a bunch of universities around Beijing. I couldn’t believe how many universities there were around Beijing. We visited a whole bunch of them.

This was my first trip in China, and there were two things I wanted to do more than anything in the world. I went with the students when they went to the Forbidden City. I

really wanted to see the Forbidden City. So we did that. And then I again went with the students to the Great Wall, which was another thing I wanted to see. That was really a struggle. It was hot and humid. It may have been 100, with high humidity. It was really hot. And I don't know if you know—have you been to China?

Reti: I have not.

Blumenthal: So when you go out to the place where the wall is, you can climb up on top of the wall and then walk along the top of the wall, which is challenging, because the wall goes straight up over mountains and hills and the steps in the wall are not uniform, so every step is different.

Reti: Oh my gosh. You could fall so easily.

Blumenthal: That's right. It's a major climb, especially in the heat. I had taken a bunch of water with me, because I was determined to climb up to the end of that stretch. The wall ends at a certain point. I mean, not that the original wall ended, but you can only climb so far before you reach a point where you're not allowed to climb further.

Reti: Is that like a few miles?

Blumenthal: Yes. Something like that. It was the difference in height that was really the issue. And I remember I climbed that. It was so hard and I was in pretty good shape. And there was a student, a woman from Berkeley. It turned out she was a marathon runner. She took pity on me and she walked with me up the wall. I'm sure she could have done it much faster by herself. It was so hot. So hot.

Reti: It was extreme sports.

Blumenthal: It was extreme. I probably shouldn't have done it, but I did. We did get to the top. I could never have done it without her. That was really a lot of fun. I enjoyed that. It made the trip worthwhile. Something I've always wanted to do. Again, I got to do it with the students.

I also saw Doug Lin there. don't know if I've mentioned Doug before in these interviews.

Reti: A little bit.

Blumenthal: Doug, a few years, probably five years earlier than this had been appointed the founding director of the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at Peking University, so he spent half time in Santa Cruz and half time in Peking, Beijing, Peking University. He'd established the Kavli Institute. He designed a building. He built the building. It was already finished by the time I visited. So he invited me out to visit him there. It was kind of cool. He took me first to see the president of Peking University. So we had a conference there. What's really weird in China, do you remember pictures of Richard Nixon and Mao and that conference where they sat in these humongous chairs? They were next to each other and facing in the same direction. And that's how they had their meetings.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Well, it turns out every university in China has a room, usually a big room, and at the head of the room are two humongous chairs facing the same direction just as in the Nixon-Mao picture. And then along the sides, there are chairs for your retinues to sit on. This was my first experience. It was so weird, because I'd much rather talk to somebody by facing them. You know what I mean?

Reti: (laughs) Right. I mean, it's kind of a bizarre way to connect with somebody, right.

Blumenthal: So that was my first experience with that particular kind of interactive approach. Doug took me to Peking University to do that. Then we went to the Kavli Institute. I was so impressed with the Kavli Institute, the amount of research that was being done there. Doug had made it into a first-class research institute. He had done a great thing there. He had designed the building, I don't mean personally, but he insisted on what features it would have.

And in my honor, Doug invited a bunch of people who were in China who had been at UCSC. I was kind of shocked at how many people I knew who had been either graduate students or postdocs at UCSC in physics or in astronomy. It was like a blast from the past to see some of them. It was very nice. So I really enjoyed visiting him there.

After that, Doug had arranged for the two of us to go to a traditional Chinese opera. Traditional Chinese opera is very different than Western opera. It goes on for hours and hours and hours. If you go to an opera in San Francisco, you don't get to get up and go in and out any time you want to. There, in Beijing, people are getting up and going in and out all the time.

Reti: I guess if it's going to be hours long, you would have to. (laughs)

Blumenthal: I guess. But it was just not a big deal when people got up, or went in or out. But anyway, Doug and I stayed for a long time. I was hoping we'd get to stay till the end. And of course, I could understand none of it, but Doug was translating for me. I really enjoyed it. It was so different than anything I'd ever seen before. It was quite an experience.

But to get to the opera, Doug said we couldn't drive. The reason we couldn't drive was because Beijing was a parking lot at rush hour. You wouldn't get anywhere. If you picked the worst traffic jam you've ever seen in San Francisco or New York or wherever and

multiplied by a factor of five, that's Beijing. In fact, there was a cloud over Beijing because it was so smoggy. People before I went told me I shouldn't consider running, because it is not a good place to run.

So we took the subway, which was a trip because I was dressed in a suit because I was meeting the president of the university. Of course, nobody was dressed anything like that. The subway was packed solid. It was hotter than hell. It was packed solid with people, so you couldn't barely turn around inside the subway car. And I was a head, or a head and a half taller, than everyone else.

Reti: (laughs) You're this giant guy in a suit. An American white guy.

Blumenthal: Everybody was looking at me. I was truly the center of attention in the subway.

Reti: Oh, wow. (laughs)

Blumenthal: And what was even weirder was, all of the announcements for stops were done in Chinese and in English. The English was so understandable. I don't know about you, but when I go to an airport or a train station and they make announcements over the PA, I usually can't even understand them. In that subway, it was beautiful, clear. I could have ridden the subway there, it was so clear. I would have been comfortable doing that by myself. So we took the subway there.

We had to leave the opera at like 11:30 or something at night because Doug arranged dinner with some other folks.

Reti: At 11:30 at night?

Blumenthal: Yes. So we went to a late dinner. So we had dinner. We were staying at a hotel way out on the outskirts of Beijing. So when dinner was over, Doug took me outside and got a cab, leaned in and gave a bunch of direction to the driver, and said, “Bye.” I realized I was so screwed if this didn’t work.

Reti: (laughs) Oh, no.

Blumenthal: I had not even taken down the address in Chinese of the hotel. I mean, I just hadn’t even thought about it. I should have done that.

Reti: Never to be seen again, right?

Blumenthal: That’s right. But it all worked out. They did indeed get us back to our hotel. So that was funny.

Let’s see, anything else on that trip? Again, I remember visiting a whole pile of universities. Oh, yeah, that was also the trip in which I talked to a representative of a university in Beijing. They wanted us to set up at UC some kind of a training program for vice presidents. I remember having some preliminary discussions with them and they described what they wanted and how they wanted to do it. I said I would bring it back and we’d have some discussions on our end. But I remember saying to them, “Look, what you’ve described sounds really good, but I think you could do it much more cheaply.”

And their response was, “Money is not an issue for us.” I remember thinking, when is the last time I heard an American university say that?

Reti: (laughs) Yeah, really.

One of the other things I remember was at the end of this visit, the Chinese host decided to hold a big banquet in our honor. They had the banquet in this huge building that had

been built for the Olympics. This was the only thing in this big building that day was this banquet in our honor because they hadn't occupied it yet after the Olympics. It was a banquet like I've never experienced. It was like twelve or fifteen courses. They kept bringing food after food after food. It was just an amazing experience.

Reti: Sounds good. (laughs)

Blumenthal: All right. So this isn't meant to be a highlight of the world, but I have a few more to go through. Later on, Ashish and I and a bunch of faculty went to South Korea, which was a good trip. We visited a bunch of companies in Seoul to try to bolster some of our industrial partners. The faculty gave talks there and visited there. One of the big companies had a big dinner for us. I remember it was very nice. I think the main thing that came out of it was number one, visiting with various companies in Seoul. And I think the big hit was Lise Getoor,⁴⁵⁴ who was leading our data sciences program in engineering. She's really good and she's still here.

Then we went to KAIST [Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology] to visit them. And of course one of the reasons I wanted to go to KAIST was to see Steve [Sung-Mo] Kang, who was the president of KAIST at the time. KAIST really thrived under Steve. I was very happy. I think he was quite successful as president of KAIST, really moved it up the charts. I'm not sure how happy his wife was there. I didn't talk to them about it. I think she was anxious to move back to the US, which they ultimately did. They're now back in Santa Cruz.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: But Steve made a big difference there. I gave a talk there. I think they rounded up an audience to make sure there were people coming to it. But what came out is we did establish an agreement to start a program to bring, thirty or forty students from

KAIST every summer to campus here to take summer school classes in computer science and one other subject, I forget which. But basically they were computer science students, and they interacted with our students. It was quite successful and went on for a number of years.

So then the next year I went back to China for a second trip. There were some real reasons for doing that trip. For whatever reason, which I can't remember, Ashish couldn't join us on that trip. So invited Margaret to come. And not only did she appreciate coming, but she did a great job keeping us organized—

Reti: I bet.

Blumenthal: —which, believe me, we needed. It was a two-week trip, and basically we visited ten universities between Beijing and Shanghai. Doug was with us on the trip, for almost all of the trip. Doug is a real taskmaster, so he had us up at six o'clock every morning. We were going full speed all day. There were very few breaks. He kept us going all day into the evenings, every day. I think I earned my pay on that trip.

Of course Doug arranged everything. It really impressed me to see how much respect Doug received throughout the country. He is remarkably well known in China, especially, even among presidents at universities.

We also met with the ambassador, who was a former senator for Montana, Max Baugus. Good guy. I liked him. I really, really liked him.

Then as part of the trip, I gave a talk that was arranged by the embassy. They do these informal talks by visiting American scholars. I kind of gave my standard talk on a hundred years of paradigm shifts in our understanding of the universe.

Reti: Wow. I want to hear that.

Blumenthal: I'm happy to. That went very, very well. They were quite interested. It was an overflow audience. Lots of questions. We visited the Chinese Academy of Sciences, which is their equivalent to our National Academy, to have some discussions there with some key people about the 30-Meter Telescope project. Of course, I'm not officially associated with TMT, but I'm close to Henry Yang, who was the head of the board. And of course, I probably was chair of the Keck board at the time. So we had a lot of discussions, which were important, because I came to some understandings that served me later as well, in particular, an understanding of what were their concerns in China about the project. I think one of their concerns was they really, really wanted the National Science Foundation involved. The reason was because China knows how to deal with Japan; they know how to deal with the United States government, but they're not sure how to deal with places like Caltech and UC.

Reti: I see. Yeah.

Blumenthal: So they feel a lot more comfortable dealing with the government than they feel dealing with an entity, either a public or a private, within the country. Secondly, they were concerned (and they were prescient) that if they're going to be a partner in this project and if it were built in Hawaii, they wanted to make sure their scholars had access to the country. They felt that an agreement signed with the federal government would give them that, whereas an agreement with UC and Caltech didn't really guarantee anything. They are not stupid.

So for me, that was a very important conversation and I came to a much better understanding. It served me well because sometime later I was in Washington, DC, and I had lunch with France Cordova, who's the director of the National Science Foundation. I

think that those conversations helped inform my conversations with her about the 30-Meter Telescope as well.

Then I met with the Chinese Scholarship Commission, whatever it was called. Doug really was the moving force behind this. But basically we reached two agreements. One was a 10 plus 10 agreement involving 10 US universities associated with the 30-Meter Telescope project and 10 Chinese universities. It's one thing to build a project or a telescope. It's another thing to collaborate on research, or on techniques for doing observations or whatever. So the idea was there are ten universities in the US that would participate. I think those were eight of the UC campuses, excluding Merced and San Francisco, neither of whom have astronomers. Plus Caltech, plus Hawaii, on the US side and ten major universities on the Chinese side. We would ask the Chinese for funding to provide exchanges, so their scholars could come to our universities, and ours could come to their universities. They were enthusiastic, so we quickly reached an agreement, although frankly I think Doug basically reached that agreement behind the scenes beforehand. It's so clearly an obvious thing to do.

What I didn't anticipate was that the pushback was going to come after we came back. Caltech was skeptical of doing this. And I don't remember which one of these UC campuses pushed back on it. Maybe it was Davis. I couldn't believe they were turning down free money. But in fact, scholars have exchanged, so it has worked. So I think that was important. Again, I really think this was Doug who was the force behind it and to some extent, maybe Sandy [Faber] as well during her previous visit to China. They'd had those discussions. My role was to be the bigwig who blesses it all from our end.

The other major thing that we discussed with them is support for UCSC to bring some more Chinese students to UC Santa Cruz. They were quite supportive of that. We were

there at the wrong time in the cycle to get money in that particular cycle, but I think we've gotten some more since. I'll talk in a minute about that, the follow-up to this for that meeting.

But other than that, we visited a bunch of universities. It was fascinating; it was interesting. Some universities were extremely eminent. Some of the universities were less so. But they were still, nonetheless, extremely interesting places. I was quite impressed. Of course, we're just UC Santa Cruz. Those ten universities were among the ten best in the country, so they have lots of collaborations with lots of other big universities. I was impressed with how well we were received and what the potential was.

And it was cool, because along the way I saw various other scholars. I mentioned Gail Hershatter before. Gail was visiting one of the universities when I was there. I saw her there.

Reti: So generally, what kinds of impressions had the universities in China had about UCSC before meeting you? And were they accurate impressions or assumptions? I'm curious as to what our reputation is over there.

Blumenthal: That's a hard question for me to answer because I think Doug prepped everybody on both sides.

Reti: Ah. Okay, okay.

Blumenthal: I think Doug had a script for me and he had a script for— So it kind of made it hard to make those judgments.

Reti: I see. Okay. Fair enough.

Blumenthal: That's not a negative thing about Doug.

Reti: No, no, no, it sounds like he did a great job.

Blumenthal: Oh, one other thing I should say. We were there for two weeks, but we didn't do much that was like just fun. Doug didn't give us time to do anything that was just fun. But one afternoon we had a cancellation or something, so we had an afternoon free. So Margaret and I wanted the driver to take us to a market in Beijing, to shop. I bought a few little things, but Margaret bought a bunch of stuff. The driver didn't speak English. But he took us around. At a certain point along the way, when we were in some shop, we're talking to or trying to interact with the shop owner, and the driver's there trying to help us. And all of a sudden, from all around, people are coming over to me and asking if they can take a picture with me. People really wanted to take their picture with me. I was good about this. It happens a lot here, like at graduation, where students or families want to take a picture with me. So I wasn't all that shocked by it. I did it. And so finally when we reconnected with Doug or somebody who could translate for the driver, we asked the driver what did he say? All these people wanted to take pictures with me. He said he told everyone that I was the president of Stanford.

Reti: Oh my God! (laughs) Oh, no. That's hilarious.

Blumenthal: Prior to that trip to China, there was actually a meeting beforehand that I went to in Houston. It was a meeting that was arranged between maybe twenty American university presidents and twenty Chinese university presidents. Those meetings took place on a somewhat irregular but frequent basis. This one was in Houston. It was good because it gave me an opportunity to meet some of the university presidents that I would meet again in China. So that was very helpful in that regard. Also at the meeting was, her name was Madame Liu,⁴⁵⁵ who was the number three ranking person in the Chinese government and the highest-ranking woman in the Chinese government. She actually

came to the meeting and talked with the university presidents. I was quite impressed at that. One of the people in her entourage was Yao Ming, the famous basketball player.

And then subsequent to that trip to China, I attended a meeting in New York. I think the meeting was with a bunch of Chinese scholars and a few others. It was quite interesting because Madame Liu came as well. This was one of her final months in office. She retired shortly thereafter. But one of the people at this meeting was Henry Kissinger. So I got to meet and talk to Henry Kissinger, which was an experience. He's in his nineties now. I was struck by how short he was. I mean, I'm sure as you get older, you shrink. But he was probably never a very tall person.

Reti: No. My aunt actually went to school with him, believe it or not. They were children together in Germany before the Holocaust.

Blumenthal: Really? No kidding. He's in a room, you know where he is. He is a presence. He seems sharp as a tack. I didn't get really to have serious conversation with him, but I did talk to him briefly and quite found him quite impressive. But the main reason we were there, Ashish and I, was because there we actually signed the formal final agreements with CSC. So that was great. That was a really good reason to go. There were some other universities there and I first learned about UC San Diego's issues with China because they'd been basically ostracized in many ways once they invited the Dalai Lama to give their commencement address. I think it's a big issue. They're still not on China's good list.

Reti: Interesting. Because we've had the Dalai Lama speak here as well, but not for commencement.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I think the publicity was one factor. I actually think another factor is because the chancellor is of Indian descent. There were writings in the Chinese press

attacking him for his Indian background. In many ways, Pradeep is as American as apple pie. Yes, he has ties to India.

Doug wasn't there for the meeting, but he came at the end. He took us out to dinner at his son's restaurant in Brooklyn. So that was kind of cool.

Reti: Great.

Blumenthal: Okay. I think I got two more trips and then we're done. These two we combined. We did a week in Japan and then a week in India. The week in India was to give the plenary address at a meeting, a really quite large meeting, of high school counselors and those who interact with high school counselors in India. And it's quite interesting. The meeting was organized jointly by Michelle Whittingham from UCSC and Ganesh Kohli,⁴⁵⁶ who founded the IC3 movement.

Ganesh is really a visionary. He was an engineer. He made his money and then decided at a relatively young age that he really wanted to make a mark on the world rather than get rich. He realized that in India there were no such thing as high school counselors, so he made it his mission to establish the concept and the reality of high school counselors throughout India. He's made a huge, huge difference. He's taken this worldwide now as an effort to encourage high schools around the world to have counselors who can help students find their path in life. I had met Ganesh before because every year for the last five years, a group of Indian counselors has come to Santa Cruz, maybe twenty-five or so. He's accompanied them several times. I've given talks to them and they've gone really well. For some reason, I feel that I've had a real rapport with the counselors from India. I tried, and I think succeeded, in making the impression that we were different and in some ways much more welcoming than other universities. There was something special here. So I've grown very fond of Ganesh. That's why he invited me out to give the talk. At some

point maybe in the not too distant future, I will probably interact with him again in my new role. But that was the real reason that I came out there. So we did that.⁴⁵⁷

I also had probably the best Indian dinner I've ever had in my life. I'm not a fan of Indian food. I don't really like Indian food that much usually. But we had an Indian dinner that was cooked the old-fashioned, traditional way, a 500 year-old way of cooking. It was just fantastic. It was by far the best Indian dinner I've ever had in my life.

The other thing we did on that trip was we went to Japan. In Japan, we met with the American ambassador, which was kind of a different trip than in China. The American ambassador had been appointed by Donald Trump, but it turned out his wife had grown up in Capitola. So when she heard that we were visiting the embassy, she insisted that instead we do a meeting at the ambassador's residence, which turns out to be an extremely historic place because it's the oldest US ambassador residence in the world.

Reti: Hmm. This is in Tokyo?

Blumenthal: Yeah. I asked them about World War II, what happened during that time. They said, well the Swiss took it over during World War II and then gave it back. They said it was very historic, because that's where Douglas MacArthur lived after the war. There was this very famous meeting where he invited the emperor, Emperor Hirohito, to come to the house. They came and there was this very famous picture that was taken of the two of them. McArthur had to make a decision about whether to prosecute Hirohito for war crimes. He decided not to, which was probably a very wise decision. There was this picture of the two of them shaking hands or side by side, right in the living room of that house. It was widely publicized. For Japanese citizens, this was the first time they'd ever seen a picture of their emperor. So it was really quite something. It was a bit strange

to walk into the house and see this big picture of a smiling Donald Trump shaking hands with the ambassador.

Reti: Right. (laughs) This is pretty recently.

Blumenthal: Yes. But he seemed like a decent enough guy, he and his wife. I think they were really committed to American interests and really very good.

Again, I gave a talk, the same talk on paradigm shifts in the universe, at the embassy. It was different in the sense that in Japan, one of the things I noticed was that English, though spoken theoretically by everyone, because it is taught in the schools, is not spoken well. I don't think it's taught very well. So a lot of students have trouble with English, much more so than in China, much, much more so. So when I gave my talk at the embassy to basically high school seniors, I would say half of the audience could understand me and the other half had to listen to the simultaneous translation. And during the Q&A period, half of the questions had to be translated to me. But they were substantively good questions.

Again, we visited a whole bunch of universities, both in Tokyo and Kyoto. Our goal was to find two universities where we could really establish an exchange program. Education Abroad for UC had no Japanese universities they were working with. I'm not sure I understand exactly why.

Reti: That's surprising.

Blumenthal: Most of the students from Santa Cruz who went to Japan ended up at some very famous Christian university in Tokyo. We wanted to provide some other choices. We talked to a lot of places. Most of the time the issue had to do with how few of their classes were offered in English. But we found a couple of good prospects we're still pursuing.

And I got to visit one of the top research centers in astronomy in the world in Japan, which was also kind of cool, meeting some people doing outstanding work there. We really were appreciated. It was funny because I visited just a small portion of it, but it was a much bigger research center. They invited me to attend their daily gathering—they had this big daily coffee where maybe 100 people come in to chat. I kept looking at this old guy who kept staring at me. Finally he came over to me and somebody introduced me to him. He looked at me and he said, “Are you *the* Blumenthal?”

Reti: “The Blumenthal?” (laughs) What does that mean?

Blumenthal: So I asked him what he meant. And he said, “From Blumenthal/Primack.”

Reti: Oh! Yeah, of course.

Blumenthal: I said, yeah, I am.

Reti: Right. That’s great. (laughs)

Blumenthal: That was funny. So anyway, the main goal there I think we achieved, which was to identify some universities.

Reti: Yeah.

Union Issues at UCSC

Blumenthal: So a couple of other issues to talk about. Union issues. I guess the only thing I’m going to say about union issues is I was shocked at how difficult union issues are here at UC. Thankfully, I don’t have to negotiate salaries with unions. I think the university has generally not done a good job of negotiating, nor presenting their case for why they negotiate the way that they do. It’s gotten better. Janet [Napolitano] has finally been listening to the campuses, which didn’t happen before. But we’re still at impasse

with many unions and I don't see it getting better. I was shocked that some unions are easy to deal with and some unions, such as AFSCME, are impossible to deal with.

I think I told the story about telling Mark Yudof that he had to negotiate with unions. We, of course, face strikes all the time at UC. For Santa Cruz, we face this much more so than other campuses, because we have only two entrances to campus.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: And we have a lot of students who support union issues and who join the picket line and block the campus. So for us, every time there's a strike, it's always a struggle to know whether we can keep the campus open.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: I think that's unfortunate. I would much prefer to see a greater level of cooperation. But that's just not the way it works here and I suspect there's very little to do.

I was kind of amazed. I may have told you this before, but I'll repeat it—I think I've already mentioned that when I came in, one of the things I did is I raised the minimum wages on the campus. I did that as a chancellorial decision. Another thing that I did was I wrote a letter to the DA to get the charges dropped against some union person, although I do regret now having written that letter.

Reti: We talked about that.

Blumenthal: So I was surprised a few years later when I was on the UC Commission for the Future. Because one of the people on the commission was Art Pulaski⁴⁵⁸ who was the statewide head of the California AFL-CIO. And when I was introduced to him, he knew

who I was, and he said, “You’re supposed to be a good guy.” I was like, how the hell do you know that?

Reti: (laughs)

Blumenthal: But I think he was sincere. I think probably he’d heard about what I had done, in some ways.

Reti: Yeah. Right.

Blumenthal: And ironically, I actually am a strong supporter of unions in general, as a matter of policy. I just have found union issues to be somewhat frustrating. I did a number of times meet with representatives of all the unions on campus. We’ve had a number of meetings where one rep from every union came to the meeting. I would hear some of the issues that they had. They were usually well prepared to talk with us. Sometimes there were issues about which I could do nothing. Sometimes there were issues on which I could do something. And it always made me pleased when they presented me with something that I could actually help with. Which did happen. I think it also helped that we were able to communicate, talk to each other. That’s a tradition I would love to see continue.

Reti: Do you think that the fact that UCSC is underfunded is part of the reason that we have so many difficult union issues? Just from a staff perspective, staff have been doing more and more work, and the salaries have not kept up.

Blumenthal: It’s true. The non-unionized staff have been screwed over the last decade. Let’s call it the way it is. I feel terrible about that. Those have been systemwide decisions, though. So I don’t really think it’s the campus, or underfundedness of the campus that’s fundamentally an issue. I think the only thing that the underfundedness of the campus could relate to is the overworking of staff. That’s a legitimate issue. And it’s a huge

dilemma. Because if you give me an extra dollar, what should I do with it? Should I hire more staff to ease that burden? Should I bring in more faculty to ease the burden of overcrowdedness in the classroom? We have the worst student:FTE ratio in the UC system for permanent faculty.

Reti: The highest?

Blumenthal: The highest, yes.

Reti: That's so ironic, given where we started.

Blumenthal: Of course. So my point is, you give me a dollar as chancellor, or a million dollars, or whatever, there's a whole bunch of competing priorities for it and they're all worthwhile.

Reti: Well and that's important for readers of this oral history to understand. We're trying to get at what does it mean to be chancellor and be trying to make these decisions. Because people might only see their little piece.

Blumenthal: For a number of years, we basically prioritized hiring faculty. As we recovered from the great recession and we brought our funds into hiring faculty and supporting graduate education. That was the priority because we had hollowed out a hundred faculty positions, and we wanted to refill those positions. I don't regret having made that decision. But starting two or three years ago, we did make a conscious decision into trying to put more money into staff positions to ease overburdened staff. But again, it was perhaps a drop in the bucket. At least it was trying to move in the right direction, but I wouldn't claim to you that was a solution.

Reti: Yes.

Working with the Ohlone [Amah Mutsun] Tribe to Remove the Mission Bell

Blumenthal: So enough about unions. The Mission Bell just happened a month or so before I left office.⁴⁵⁹ I'm really proud of what we did. I think we did the right thing. I also want to say that the majority of the credit goes to Sarah Latham, who is the vice chancellor of business and administrative services. But basically we had been given this bell, which was a replica of the original bell from the Santa Cruz Mission. The campus had placed that bell somewhere near the Hahn Student Services building. I forget exactly where. I mean, I don't even remember seeing it.

Reti: People walked by it all the time and didn't realize it was there. It was directly in front of Hahn, where the path cuts up to go to go right into the administrative building.

Blumenthal: Okay. Yeah, I just never even noticed it.

Reti: Yeah. Uh-huh. I didn't for years, either.

Blumenthal: But it became an issue, particularly among the Ohlone tribe of Indians [Amah Mutsun], who are indigenous to the area, who pointed out that historically the missions were an agency of enslavement of Native Americans, and that while the bell may for some represent something about the great history of California, for others it represents a symbol of subjugation, and a painful symbol of subjugation at that.

So of course we're in this awkward position of having been donated this bell to display, but now realizing that it in many ways is contrary to the values of the campus to actually display it. So we ultimately made the decision to take down the bell. I think the Ohlone representatives were right. I think that having a symbol on campus that's truly painful to people is not a worthwhile thing to do. I think it is also important for the campus to recognize when part of your constituency feels that level of pain. I'm quite proud of what

we did. To me, this was a clear-cut decision. This wasn't one of those—oh, should we or shouldn't we? This was not a close call. I think there's still some question about what ultimately we do with the bell. Do we give it back? Do we give it to somebody else? Do we put it in storage? I mean, I don't know what we're going to do with the bell. That's another question. I don't think we're going to display it. That's not going to be my call. But I am proud of the fact that as a campus, we were responsible to the Native Americans who once occupied this land. I'm also proud of the fact that at graduation, several speakers made reference to the fact that we are on the land that originally belonged to the Ohlone Indian tribe. So to me, this is just kind of the right thing to do.

I know right now around the country, there's all this stuff going on about Confederate generals and stuff, and whether their statues should be removed, etcetera. I think those are fair debates to have. I think it's fair that Boalt Hall had to discuss what to do about the name Boalt. All of those are good discussions to have. But frankly, I saw this issue as being separated from those. This was a local issue having to do with us and our local tribes and our campus, etcetera. I'm not saying we live in a bubble, but I am saying that I don't think we were particularly influenced by the national trends. We were trying to do what was right.

Reti: Oh, that's good. That's important to hear. When I attended the ceremony, there was some discussion of eventually there being a plaque there to talk about some of these issues about why we took the bell away.

Blumenthal: I think that's entirely appropriate. We're an educational institution.

Reti: Yes, I do, too.

Blumenthal: So a plaque actually might be in some ways more noticeable and far more educational than a bell. So I'm very pleased about that.

A Few More Recollections About Key Individuals

Reti: We have about an hour. Let's double back to talk about some of these folks that we haven't talked about.

Blumenthal: Absolutely. You may remember better than I who we've talked about and who we haven't. But I thought it would be useful to go through and briefly say a little bit about some of these people.

John Simpson I know I've talked about before. I want to say, I really appreciated John. I learned a lot from observing John. And he was very open with me. I think that didn't necessarily come completely naturally to him. But I was really pleased when he moved on to Buffalo as the president of an AAU university. I've always had a warm spot for my interactions with him.

Alison Galloway, again, I've talked about before. I've talked about her as vice chair of the senate, as chair of the senate; I've talked about her as VPA and then as provost. But she has, I think, been underappreciated on this campus. She has served in so many roles, and so effectively in those roles. From my perspective, she was an outstanding EVC who took on that job at this hugely challenging moment in our history and did a marvelous job there. I think it took its toll on her. I think she burned out. She probably left the job a year later than she should have, in terms of her own psychology. It took me a while to see that. I think she saw it before I did. But I believe we owe her a huge debt of gratitude and I want to acknowledge that again.

Marlene Tromp as EVC, was here for two years. Marlene was a breath of fresh air. She brought new ideas. She brought energy. She brought a real commitment to excellence with her. I regret that she didn't stay as EVC and I even regret that she didn't become chancellor here. I'm so happy for her that she's moved on to a presidency of a place where,

I'll make a prediction, she's going to put Boise State on the map and she's going to do extremely well in her career. She is smart; she's got the ability. There's no question about it. I'm proud that we brought her here and I think she made a big difference here with the strategic plan, but she also made a big difference here in terms of cleaning up a lot of issues and forcing us to rethink things along the way. Marlene had a huge impact, even though she was only here for two years.

I want to mention Herbie Lee, briefly. He has been a VPA for a number of years now. He's brought enormous competence into that role. He understands the position. He's been a huge help on academic personnel. Very sensible. But more than that, in terms of planning, he understands the rules. When we set up the three plus three program, Riverside couldn't quite make it happen because they didn't understand how to do this and who had to approve what. Herbie just cut right through all of that and got to the core. And then he served for six months as the acting EVC during a difficult time. I'm so grateful to him for doing that.

Sarah Latham, our vice chancellor of business and academic services—in some ways, there's a few appointees whom I'm so extremely proud of having appointed, and she's one of them. I'd say Marlene was another. When we hired Sarah, Tom Vani, her predecessor, had been in office for a number of years. Tom was really competent, really knew his stuff. He was a rock of Gibraltar in the administration here. When he retired, the search committee identified two people. One was a Tom Vani clone, or as close as they could come to him. (Reti laughs) And the other was this really unusual candidate. When the search committee and Alison talked to me, that's what they said, they were both good, and could see us hiring either. But they were so different that they were night and day.

I wasn't here when they were on campus, so I interviewed them both remotely on Skype. To me, there was no question. I thought Sarah had an intelligent way of thinking about things that was exciting. That has turned out to be absolutely true. She has far exceeded my expectations. She's been fantastic in so many ways. Of course, one of the rewards for being so fantastic is that we keep heaping more responsibilities on her and she keeps rising to the occasion. Sarah is really good. This campus is extremely lucky to have her. If I have any advice for my successor, it would be do everything you can to keep Sarah because I think the campus would not work anywhere near as well without Sarah. She has been stupendous.

Meredith Michaels was the vice chancellor of planning and budget. I think I told you about my meeting with her at the retreat already.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: I know I've talked a little bit about Meredith. Not only is she a friend, and was a friend long before I was chancellor, but she's really the person who educated me a lot when I became chancellor about financial matters and budgetary matters of the university. She was so patient with me because I was not an easy student. I kept wanting to think about things in ways differently than she thought about things. I don't know if I said this to you already, but she, as a budget person, tended to think in terms of spreadsheets.

Reti: Oh, yes. And you wanted to think about what's behind the spreadsheet, the equations.

Blumenthal: I wanted to think about things algebraically. But we worked through things together. It was she who pointed out to me the need for transparency about the budget. It was she who started the Bird's Eye View, which was the annual publication of our campus

budget. It was Meredith who started meeting regularly with CPB, Committee on Planning and Budget of the senate in a way that no other previous vice chancellor had done. It was Meredith who brought up the issues that led to rebenching, the issues of disparity of funding. It was Meredith who called my attention to the fact that our tuition money was not coming back to the campus. So Meredith was so good in so many ways at pointing out things about the campus. I know there were reasons why she left when her children left to go to college. She did very, very well at Irvine, but I think she had a really great influence here.

I think we were very lucky to get Peggy Delaney to replace her. Peggy is a faculty member, a former EVC, who came into the job knowing a lot already, and had proven to be very, very valuable to me in terms of how we interact with the UC system and giving a perspective to that.

I think I mentioned her before, but Mary-Beth Harhen was a pleasure to work with when I was chair of the senate, as well as when I was chair of the Privilege & Tenure Committee, because she staffed that committee. Mary-Beth's contributions to the campus—you can't overstate them. She was director of the senate at a time when there was a lot of kerfuffle, shall we say, within the faculty about the role of the senate and the role of the senate office. She had to withstand a fair amount of personal abuse during that period and it would have been so easy for her to leave. She could have gotten a job elsewhere so easily. But she stuck it out and I really admire that about her.

Did I tell the story about taking her to see the Dalai Lama?

Reti: No.

Blumenthal: Okay. All right, so Mary-Beth, I knew, was a strong devotee to the Dalai Lama. In fact, on her desk she always had a saying of the day from the Dalai Lama. I

visited her a lot in her office when I was senate chair. So I was always reading these daily sayings from the Dalai Lama. The one I remember most is before you can achieve world peace, you must achieve inner peace.

So one day, well after I was chancellor—maybe it was six years ago—we got a call from Santa Clara University that Father Engh, who was the president, wanted to invite me and a guest to lunch with the Dalai Lama.

Reti: Oh my goodness.

Blumenthal: So I called up Kelly and asked her if she wanted to come, and she didn't. (Reti laughs) So I told Margaret to call Mary-Beth and ask her if she wanted to have—

Reti: She must have had a fit. (laughs)

Blumenthal: And Margaret told me later that she could hear Mary-Beth screaming all the way from the first floor on the other side of the building. (laughter)

Reti: That's great.

Blumenthal: So Mary-Beth and I went to see the Dalai Lama and hear him give a talk. Then they arranged this lunch. This was an experience of a lifetime—the lunch had maybe fifty people there. We had to wait for him to come. So we're all standing around talking. There were several different tables. I wasn't at the table of the Dalai Lama. I was at some other table. But we're all standing, waiting for him.

And then he walked in. He walked into the room, and he looked at me and he walked over to me. He stood in front of me. And he looked at me. He just stood there and looked at me in a practice of mindfulness, which I could not have even named at the time. And it was—you will not hear these words from me very often—but it was almost a religious

experience, and certainly it was a spiritual experience. I felt something very special in that moment. I mean, I had no idea why he had picked me as the person to do this with. There were forty-nine other people in that room. It was really quite an experience.

Reti: And he never said anything? He just looked at you.

Blumenthal: He just looked at me. Eventually I said something, or somebody said something, and the spell was broken. But we're talking about a minute or two. It was a long period of time. As I say, I felt it was kind of a, if not a religious experience, at least some kind of a deep experience. It turns out he's a very interesting man, very smart. And of course with a great sense of humor. Mary-Beth enjoyed the visit tremendously. Sometimes you get to do something for somebody— I really felt good about it.

Reti: Yeah.

Blumenthal: Let's see. I was going to say something about Sheldon Kamieniecki. Sheldon and George Van Den Abbeele came in as dean just as I came in as chancellor. As soon as it was announced that I was going to be the chancellor, I called both of them, George and Sheldon. I knew that for them, this must be scary. They were hired by one chancellor, and then all of a sudden— And that's exactly what Sheldon told me later. He said he was so glad I called because he had no idea what he was stepping into at that point. And I think it worked out remarkably well. Sheldon provided really strong and stable leadership for the Social Sciences Division. He brought a higher level of professionalism to the whole division. He had a real commitment to excellence. And he brought a level of fundraising to the division that they'd never seen before. In fact, some of his experience rubbed off on the campus. I learned lessons from him. The video that he did originally for the Social Sciences Division, we were all so impressed by it that we did one for the campus. I stole a number of his dean's council members to be foundation board members. Sheldon

brought this great level of professionalism to his job. I think that that was really important. I wanted to make sure that that got mentioned.

Well, maybe I can talk for a minute about our office. My first administrative assistant was Maurene. She was great. Maurene had been a chief administrative assistant to various heads of companies, some of whom were not the easiest people to get along with all the time. So I kept kidding her, saying if she could get along with them, she probably should be able to get along with me. Maurene was really, really very special. She knew what she was doing. I was so naïve. She'd give me these briefing books every day. That was so great to have. And when she heard that I hated paper, she instituted this system on Dropbox, and all my files came to me on Dropbox, rather than on paper. She was very flexible in that way. If this was my idiosyncrasy, she would live with it, adapt to it. She was a great person. What I liked about Maurene is that she never had any hesitation telling you what she thought. I was disappointed when she retired because Maurene had talked about the fact that she would stay on until I retired. So I was kind of disappointed when she announced—but I understood. First of all, both of her parents died within a short time of each other, so it was an obvious time to take stock. And secondly, there's no indentured servitude here.

Reti: Yeah. (laughs)

Blumenthal: Third, I've seen her many times since she's retired, and she is extremely happy. It makes my heart feel pleased to see how happy she is, and how she's taken to her life as a retired person. This was the right move for her to have taken.

Reti: Yeah. And approximately how many years was she with you?

Blumenthal: Five or six, maybe. Roughly half of my time here.

And then we replaced her with Margaret, who picked up the ball and ran with it. Margaret has been so special. Margaret was an event planner. Margaret took care of me in ways that I didn't deserve.

Reti: (laughs) I experienced some of those: her graciousness in helping facilitate the logistics of this oral history.

Blumenthal: She's just so nice. She's nice on the phone; she's nice to people. I cannot tell you how many people have come to me over the years and said, "Oh, I talked to Margaret on the phone and she was so nice. You are so lucky to have her." I think that's true. I was really lucky to have her. Now that I've been retired for three weeks, I've come to realize how lucky I really was because now I'm doing some of the stuff for myself that Margaret did for me. I realize how hard it is. (laughs)

Margaret has always been unflappable. It was so great when she came with us to China. I think she really enjoyed it. She was so crucial to that trip. She kept us going and she injected a sense of reality into things at times. So Margaret has been a joy to work with. She's made such a difference to us. She's so humane, so human. I have a tradition, and Margaret keeps telling me this is so unusual, but to me it's the most natural thing. Every day I would call her on my way into the office, and we'd chat about what was going on, or our lives, or whatever. So by the time I actually showed up, we would actually have done our conversation.

Reti: Oh, yeah, you just go for the day.

Blumenthal: Go for the day. We did it. And we weren't rushed when we talked to each other that way. I think we kept in good communications on issues. Again, she kept saying that was unusual, but it seemed to me the most natural thing. So I can't say enough about

Margaret. I hope she continues, and I hope she's happy in continuing. But I'll tell you this: she is so good, she could get a job anywhere.

And Ashish has been my chief of staff for thirteen years. He started the job two weeks before Denice committed suicide, so his start was definitely a rocky one. I think I described my first meeting with him. Ashish really picked up the reins, and to the extent that I've been successful, I owe a lot of that success to Ashish. There's no question in my mind about that. On almost a daily basis, I make decisions. We're going to do X, or we're going to do Y, or whatever. But I don't do follow-up. It's Ashish who actually does the follow-up to make sure that the right person knows that we're going to do X and Y, and who follows it to make sure that X and Y actually get done. Frankly, I don't think I'm very good at that, and frankly, I don't have the time to do that myself. Ashish knew exactly who was doing what on campus, so that when requests came in, we always got them routed to the right people.

Ashish was a huge help on issues of diversity and how we structured our diversity programs. So to the extent that we've been successful on that, I think he deserves a lot of the credit. Our enormously successful diversity certificate programs has now issued more than 400 certificates to staff and faculty on campus. That was Ashish's idea originally. It was not my idea. It was him; it came from him. In the early years he ran it and then when we hired diversity officers, he had them run it. But the point is, he's the one who came up with it and it was his baby. And to the extent that it's been successful—and it's been wildly successful—he really deserves credit for that success. Now it's been copied at other universities around the country. So he really started something with that.

But I always appreciated Ashish's ability to take difficult situations and step back and analyze them logically, something that I pride myself on doing, but in some ways, he adds

a whole new dimension to it. I'd talk to somebody; I'm upset about an issue and say I want to do something about it. I might have a conversation with Ashish. He'll say, "Well, there are four things you can do about it. You could do A, B, C, D. Here are the pros and cons." That's very helpful to have. It's the kind of conversation I try to do when I'm with my wife. I try to have that discourse with myself, too, but sometimes I get too emotionally involved. I need more time or space to do this for myself. And Ashish was able to jump in and do this right away.

You'd see this as well when I had weekly meetings, an hour meeting every week, rain or shine, with the EVC and Ashish, and in recent years with the chief of staff to the provost. Ashish has been the key player in those meetings to keep them going. Yes, I make decisions or the EVC makes decisions, but Ashish was really the one who helped keep us on a straight and narrow path of what we needed to do and what were the issues we needed to face. He was also a great source of information about what was really going on behind the surface within the university.

When he started, he was relatively unfamiliar with faculty and faculty culture, who the faculty were. He'd been the vice chancellor of student affairs up at San Francisco. But he quickly picked that up. I think many faculty are incredibly grateful to him, though not all. He had to say no to a lot of people.

Reti: It comes with the territory.

Blumenthal: It comes with the territory. And I was frankly happy to let him say no instead of me in many cases. I let him be my hitman, in a way. But he really learned. He really learned a lot, and he learned quickly. And I think he was a pretty good judge of character, too, at the end. I didn't always agree with him, but when we disagreed, he turned out to be right as often as I did. So I think Ashish was tremendous.

He also kept me out of trouble. Sometimes I would go in a direction and he said, “Look, this is going to get you in trouble. This is skirting a rule,” or, “This doesn’t smell right to me,” or, “Are you sure you want to do this?” I didn’t always agree with him, and I sometimes went forward, but I always appreciated his willingness to share with me his concerns about a direction I was inclined to be going.

I think Ashish has been crucial to the success of the campus, and to my success over these last thirteen years. It saddens me deeply that Cindy [Larive] made a decision to let him go. Since I stepped down, I put some time and effort into helping him find another position and hopefully that will prove to be successful. I think that’s a loss for the campus, but that’s not my call.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: (emotional) Let me move on. I wanted to say a word about Bill Dickinson,⁴⁶⁰ because for me, he was a very important person. I first met Bill shortly after I became chancellor when I took a trip to Boston. During that trip, I met with a bunch of alumni in the Boston area. Bill was at the time living in Maine. He came down for the meeting. He was very skeptical. He was very skeptical about a scientist as a chancellor. He was very skeptical about the changes in the university. He was very skeptical about a lot of stuff. I enjoyed talking with him about it. Of course my mantra was, we’re not going to be the same as we were in 1965. We’re going to be different. The question is: are we still going to be the same in what counts and what’s really important to people? Are we going to evolve in a way that maintains the character of the campus? The same is not going to work, was my mantra. I talked about the colleges a lot with him. Yes, the colleges aren’t the same as they were then. But they’re still crucial parts of the campus.

Bill really warmed up a lot to me. He described to me the program that he started, the Smith Society, which is designed to help students who were foster kids, or who didn't have parental folks to back them up. That's an area that means a lot to Bill. The key thing about the Smith Society is not just that they raise money to support students, but that they have mentors to support students. Bill was explaining all this to me. I got it. I told him, "You don't need to say that it's a mentoring organization. I got it completely." We really resonated because it was clear that I understood what he was talking about. That started what I think has been an important long-term relationship with Bill. I've come to appreciate him more and more over the years. The Smith Society wouldn't have happened without him and now it is a substantive and sustainable organization.

Bill has gone on to do other things. I mentioned to him at one point the plight of DACA students, or AB 540 students. I remember talking to him about that. It was a new thing to him. He had not thought about it before. So he started a program to help them as well. Bill feels where people have needs. He stepped in and he stepped up in a big way, not just with money, but with his time and with his gravitas and his leadership. To me, Bill has been very special in that regard. I was pleased as punch when we gave him the Fiat Lux award some years ago.

Reti: That's wonderful.

Blumenthal: I thought I'd mention a word or two about the presidents, although I know I've said a little bit about each of them along the way. David Saxon I met very briefly but never got to know. My sense is that Saxon was a very good president of the university. And for me, the story, the fact that he was fired by the university as an assistant professor because of the loyalty oath issue and then later rehired under court order, and later grows

to become the president of the university—to me, that’s one of the great stories of our time.

Reti: That’s true.

Blumenthal: And when I joined the regents, it shocked me that none of the regents knew that story. I was just shocked.

David Gardner, I’ve gotten to know pretty well, actually, over the years. An amazing guy. He arranged a great recovery budget for UC when George Deukmajian became governor. I thought he was a great president, until his last year when his wife died. I think his last year was a very difficult time. And when he decided to retire, there was all this controversy about his retirement package. But I thought he did a lot for the university during his time. He worked closely with George Deukmejian, who as a governor was highly supportive of the university.

Gardner is still active today. Still as smart as can be. I remember meeting him, maybe it was the first time I met him, at an event at Merced. I had been noodling around on some issue about the history of UC that I didn’t understand and somebody said, “You should ask David Gardner.” So I went up to him cold and I asked him my question. And by God, he was able to give me the answer and talk it through. I was so impressed with how much he knew. I find him an extremely impressive guy.

The same with Dick Atkinson. Dick Atkinson was outstanding as a scholar. I think it is not so appreciated today that he was a path-breaking scholar in his field of psychology. He really changed the whole field. He was truly one of the outstanding researchers. Yes, he became the director of the National Science Foundation, the chancellor at UC San Diego, president of UC. Dick was a really smart guy. As president of UC, he wanted to make a difference. It was his decision to take on the college board and bend them to his will, in

some sense. And he did. Dick didn't think small. Dick realized the bully pulpit role of the president of UC and used it. He may have been the last of the great presidents who used the bully pulpit to advantage. I don't think any of his successors have really done it.

Bob Dynes I've talked about before. I think Bob was underappreciated. I think he will be remembered for the compensations scandals of UC, for which he deserves some blame. But people forget some of the other things that he did, for example, persuading Schwarzenegger to form an agreement with the university about funding. I think Dynes was basically a very good guy who fell afoul of some long history at UC that he didn't change fast enough. But he's a good physicist and a solid person, and I think just generally a good and sensible man who of course appointed me as chancellor, so he clearly made some great appointments. (Reti laughs) But in fact, he appointed other outstanding chancellors as well, for example, Gene Block. I think he's somebody who deserves a good place in history.

Mark Yudof, I've already talked about a fair amount. I want to emphasize the two things that I think Mark Yudof did that were really fundamental to the success of the university—and I don't think he gets enough credit for either one—he restored the faith of the regents in the presidency. Because at the end of Dynes' term, when Dick Blum was chair of the regents, they withdrew a lot of the authority of the president and brought it back to the regents, so much so that WASC actually did an external review of the regents about whether or not they were micromanaging the university, and the conclusion was, they were! Which really pissed off the regents. But that's another story. Yudof, when he came in, had such a high level of professionalism and such experience that he restored faith in the president. As a result, the regents basically re-delegated many of the things that they had undelegated before, and brought the university back to a more sensible point of equilibrium. So that, to me, was a great accomplishment.

The other great accomplishment was he dealt with the issue of the retirement system. And he dealt with it at the time of the great recession. The regents, in their infinite wisdom, had stopped putting money into the retirement system twenty-five years earlier. The system was well-funded, the retirement system. But it was slowly going down, and it was just approaching 100 percent funding when the recession hit. We've talked about that before. I won't go into the gory details of this, except to say that to me it was one of the great accomplishments of Mark Yudof that he dealt with the issue. He took on a very difficult issue, even at difficult financial times, to ensure the future viability of the retirement system.

The jury is still out on Janet Napolitano. I think this is going to be a hard one for historians to measure. She's been a better president since SurveyGate. For her sake, I hope that's not all she's remembered for. Under her tutelage, the university has done a number of right moves. She has certainly been great about reacting to changing times. When sexual harassment became an issue, she jumped on it and she changed the whole way we do Title IX within the university. It was the right thing to do at the right time. When there was a massive break-in at UCLA's computers, she jumped on it and established a whole new system for how we deal with computer security within the UC system. So she's really good at jumping on issues and making sure that they become non-issues.

I'm not sure I can point to the academic leadership that she's brought to the university, although her appointment of Michael Brown I strongly supported, of course, and feel that maybe that's good enough. She has now a good relationship with the Academic Senate, certainly much better than she had in her early days as president. I think the jury's still out. Her challenge is going to be with the new chair of the board of regents. I don't think that there's any real love lost between John Pérez and Janet Napolitano. I think that will

be a challenge for her. But I think she has an opportunity. But I think the jury still very much is out.

I wanted to mention Nathan Brostrom because Nathan is one of the nicest people I've met, and I think one of the most amazing. He has done some amazing things for UC in terms of financial management. He's created financial ways for the university either to make money or save money that has really saved us during these difficult budget times, and I include this period as a difficult budget time. He's created new investments. In some ways, I look at what Nathan has done and I say, well, duh, we should have been doing this for years. But the truth is, we weren't. And of course, after the fact it's a lot easier to say: like duh. I really want to give him a lot of credit for what he's done. Nathan is a nice guy. I think I mentioned earlier that I interviewed him as one of the candidates for the position. I've never regretted that recommendation to hire him. Now Nathan has moved on. I'm sad and happy—happy for Nathan, sad for us, that Nathan is going to be the acting chancellor at Merced. I think that's something he's always wanted to do, to be a president. On the other hand, we will miss him enormously at the Office of the President. He has a brilliance and a kindness and a forthrightness that I've really, really come to appreciate. So I think that's unfortunate.

I was going to mention Bruce Darling. He was the vice president of external relations under Atkinson and Dynes. Atkinson brought him up from San Diego. I interacted with him a lot as chair of the senate, and later as chancellor. Bruce is a complicated guy. Not highly educated. I don't know if he has more than a bachelor's degree. But Bruce is smart. I mean, there aren't that many people who I disagree with about an issue, who through pure logical argument can convince me that I'm wrong, or convince me to change my mind, but Bruce is one of them. So in many ways, I've always been impressed with Bruce's intelligence. The issue with Bruce has always been to what extent he was pushing his own

agenda, rather than that of the university. Word around him was that he wanted to be the president, and he had strong support among the regents. But no academic qualifications. And I think that Bruce was one of the people who helped bring down Bob Dynes. I know that when Yudof came in, Yudof got rid of him as soon as he could. I just have mixed feelings about Bruce. I think he's very, very smart and very, very talented. But again, I've always been somewhat careful in my dealing with him. But I do have to say that Bruce did a fabulous job when he served for a couple of years as acting vice president of lab management. This was a time when the University really needed sound leadership in that role, and Bruce provided it.

A person I really did like was Larry Hershman, who was the vice president of budget for many, many years. He retired during Yudof's term. Hershman was so smart, and he did so much for the university. He was not transparent. There wasn't a transparent bone in his body. (Reti laughs) But he was effective in Sacramento. He was smart. And when I was senate chair, he was quite open about sharing with me what was going on with the budget in a very open and honest way. And quite blunt. I remember being critical of the dean of the business school at Berkeley on issues of diversity. I mentioned something about that to Hershman. He was right there. He said, "Absolutely." He said, "This is terrible. There's no justification for any of it." He saw it all and he had good judgment about it. When he retired, they gave him a UC medal and I was very, very pleased.

I'll say a word about Jud King. Jud was provost under Dick Atkinson. He was the perfect provost for Dick. Dick was the visionary. Dick was the guy who wanted to make an imprint. Jud was the guy who knew how the university worked and could keep the university working. And it was really a great partnership between the two of them.

I met Jud when I was appointed to the Academic Planning Council, when I was chair of the senate at Santa Cruz. Jud chaired that. I was just struck that this guy knew it all. You could never ask him a question he didn't know the answer to. And just very professional, all the way from beginning to end. I was so impressed. When Dynes came in, Jud decided to leave. He went on, spent ten years as the director for the Center for Studies in Higher Education at Berkeley and did a great job there.

Jud was fortunate. He came in at the right time and with the right president and I think they made good music together.

I've talked about Larry Pitts before, so I won't add a lot about Larry. I didn't know Larry when he was elected vice-chair of the senate. There was an election. There were a bunch of candidates. I had my favorite candidate. Larry had not been on council, so I'd never met him. People spoke extremely highly of him. So when the candidate who I supported was eliminated, I supported Larry even though I didn't know him. What impressed me about him was that everyone said that he basically revitalized the Academic Senate at San Francisco, and it had been nothing until he came along. And here's this guy who's a neurosurgeon, one of the most high-powered, maybe the most high-powered specialty in medicine. Surgeons you don't think of as people who are going to be doing great university service. And here he was devoting all this time to the senate, and then agreeing to be elected vice-chair of the senate. So I supported him and got to know him after he became vice chair. Very impressive guy. He knew a lot. He wasn't afraid to say what he thought.

Then when I became his vice-chair myself, I learned so much from him. I may have said this already, but I am so personally grateful to him for all that he taught me, and for the patience he showed for my idiocy sometimes. I just learned so very, very much from him. He was an outstanding chair of the senate. Here's this neurosurgeon guy from UCSF. He

was a hero to the community college and CSU people as well because he interacted so well with them. Then later on he became provost under Mark Yudof and did that for, I think, on the order of five years. He did an excellent job. Larry's still doing it. He's now the chair of the board of trustees for the American University of Armenia.

Reti: So you'll be working together on that as well.

Blumenthal: Yeah. I look forward to working with him again. He's taken it very seriously. And he's an activist chair, I know that.

Aimeé Dorr I've talked about before.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: I was impressed with her since my first meetings with her. Aimeé, I credit with getting me more fully involved with the senate. Quite impressive. I was pleased when she was appointed provost. I think she was a good provost, not an outstanding provost. She did not assert herself particularly with Janet and I think Academic Affairs languished a little bit under her. I also, of course, had issues with her about UCO and Lick. But on the other hand, I'm pleased that she continued this tradition of having former senate chairs be the provost. Of course, she was followed by Michael Brown, who I've talked about a lot. My admiration for Michael is unbounded. I don't know that I need to say more.

I think I've already talked about Maria Bertero-Barceló.

Reti: Yes, you have.

Blumenthal: So I don't know that I need to say a lot more about her. She was fantastic as an executive director of the senate.

I thought I'd kind of finish off saying a few words about a few regents. The regents have changed a lot. When I came onto the regents as a faculty representative, there were some classic figures there, people who, for better or for worse, had huge impact and were intellectual giants in some ways. Several were what I like to call responsible adults. By and large they were well informed. The regents today are very different. I don't feel that there are nearly as many responsible adults on the regents today as there used to be. That worries me about the future of the university. We have Jerry Brown to thank for that.

I want to say a word about George Marcus, since he's been a friend for so many years. I've mentioned him a few times here already. But the key thing about George Marcus was when he was on the regents, there was no question that he was on the side of faculty. That's what he cared about, outstanding faculty. Every other issue to him was secondary. I so admired that about George.

Judy Hopkinson, I also admired. Because she was smart and always well prepared. She had courage. She had intelligence. She read every word of every briefing book and agenda that she was ever given. She was relentless in her questioning of issues if she didn't understand them. I really admire her commitment to the university in that regard. I also admire that she took on John Moores when he was the chair of the regents and led the successful effort of the regents to undo the damage he did to the university. They didn't exactly censure him, but they basically slapped him on the wrist for the article that he wrote, I think it was in *Forbes* magazine, about UC.

Reti: Yes.

Blumenthal: Claiming UC was violating the law on affirmative action.

John Moores was another character. Here's this guy. He's a Democrat; he's appointed by Gray Davis, a Democrat, to be on the regents. In some ways, on a personal level, John

Moore was very nice, a very nice man. He took the regents—he gave us all tickets to see the Padres play the Giants. He owned the Padres in those days. In fact, that was even funny. I was at a meeting at UCLA with a bunch of students and regents. I was at a table with John Moore. He came and sat down. A student asked him what does he do for a living, and he says, “Oh, I have a ball club.”

They said, “Well, what ball club?”

He said, “The San Diego Padres.”

Reti: (laughs) That’s funny.

Blumenthal: (laughs) Eyes got wide when he said that. But John became this monomaniac that the university was violating Proposition 209, and particularly that Berkeley was violating Proposition 209. He was a thorn in the side of Bob Dynes when he was president. He made a big deal with the regents. It was all a bunch of nothing. I don’t blame John for having standards, and I know that when I became chair of the senate and I had to bring a revised proposal on how we would revise our admissions policies to John, John particularly appreciated the fact that we were revising the policies in a way to make them more rigorous. He was in favor of rigor. Absolutely. But he just went nuts on this issue. And so the Berkeley approach to Comprehensive Review, or Holistic Review, got analyzed to death over and over again. I can talk about that at some length, but I won’t bore you by doing it. It was really sad to the extent that he took this on and ultimately, he resigned from the regents.

But one regent that Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed—and he appointed some damn good regents—was Regent Russ Gould, who had been the former Department of Finance director, I think under [Governor Pete] Wilson. Gould was good. He was a solid person, a

solid adult. Yeah, he was a Republican, but I could relate to him and I felt that he always had the university's back.

Another example of a Republican who did that was Joanne Kozberg, who was appointed by Wilson. But Joanne was a sensible adult, a sensible person. She dealt with admissions issues. She did it sensibly. She was the counterpoint to John Moores. Whereas John would be screaming at the top of his lungs; she would be logical, soft-spoken, and efficient.

Blumenthal: George Kieffer, I've talked a little bit about. I really want to emphasize that as chair of the regents, I think he took over at a very difficult time as SurveyGate was breaking. He led a board that was rapidly changing with all of the new Jerry Brown appointments through some very difficult times. He did it in an activist way, in a way that was respectful to the rest of the board, and in a way that I think served everyone extremely well. George was very interested in the policy issues. I enjoyed working with him on the committees that we worked on together. Very much so.

Final Reflections on UC Santa Cruz

Blumenthal: And maybe now I should just say a word about the traditions of the university?

Reti: Sure. That makes sense.

Blumenthal: Again, I wish I had deep wisdom that everyone would point to, but it doesn't work that way. There're two things I want to mention briefly. One is the role of the chancellor and how it has evolved. And then I want to talk a little bit about the traditions of Santa Cruz, what makes us so special, and how I see them moving forward.

The role of the chancellor has evolved dramatically. I think Dean McHenry, when he was chancellor, had his finger in every nook and cranny of the campus in some sense. I don't

think a decision got made that he didn't, in some ways, have his finger on. I think that was great. That was appropriate for a visionary leader at a new campus starting out in that period of time. He brought such leadership to the campus. The campus really needed his active involvement, especially since we had set up a system that, by its very nature, couldn't run smoothly. The colleges posed challenges like none ever seen before in American higher education and it took a strong leader to make that system continue to operate successfully, as it did. So he was very involved on campus. I'm not sure to what extent he was involved nationally or internationally. My suspicion is not that much, but I don't really know that. I think that continued on for many of the early chancellors. I think there was a lot of inward focusing in terms of the growth of the campus. That was appropriate.

But several things have happened in the interim that have fundamentally changed the role of the chancellor. One is the growth of the campus. We are now a much more complex organization. We're an 800 million dollar organization with lots of tentacles in lots of different places. And there's no way a mere human could be truly hands on and provide the kind of global leadership that you need on a campus like that. So I think there's this fundamental impossibility of micromanagement because of our growth and the complexity of our organization.

Secondly, the administration has evolved, has become itself more complex to respond to this. And at a certain point, and you may know better than I, it may have been in M.R.C.'s time; it may have been Karl Pister's time—I can't remember—we converted our academic vice chancellor position into an executive vice chancellor position. And at a certain point—again, I'm not sure exactly when in our history—we made the people at the top a box with the chancellor and EVC.

Reti: I guess that would have been Michael Tanner who was the first one. It was under Pister, I believe.

Blumenthal: I'm not sure, either. But it certainly happened relatively late. And that made a lot of sense, given the complexity of the campus. And people determined this in different ways. There are really two models now in the UC system. There's the model that we've had under M.R.C. and under me, in which we treat the box as really a box. I truly believe that Dave Kliger and Alison Galloway and Marlene Tromp knew everything I knew. I mean, not literally. But they were aware of the key points on every issue that I dealt with. We divvied up work in one way or another so that they took primary responsibility for some things, and I did for others. And even during my chancellorship, my responsibilities evolved more and more toward the outside world. I've always felt that I had an interest and wanted to keep my finger on the internal workings of the campus. But my finger was less and less on that particular button as time went on, just because there's only so many hours in the day.

It may change. There's another model in the UC system, and I don't know whether my successor, Cindy Larive will shift the campus in that direction.⁴⁶¹ It certainly was the case at Riverside and at San Diego. There, the chancellor actually takes greater control over some of the non-academic functions of the university that I would have put under the EVC. But in that model, the EVC acts more like an AVC over anything related to academics, and only that. So I don't know how that's going to work here. I don't know what choice she'll make. But it may change. And there is no right answer to that. The answer is whatever the chancellor feels most comfortable with.

But notwithstanding that structural issue, the campus is so big that the role has changed. The other key thing that's made the role change is the need to interface with the world

outside of the campus. Part of that is the community and all of the community issues. I'm not saying that McHenry and Sinsheimer didn't deal with community issues, because they certainly did. But it was a very different day in McHenry's time. It was all love and goodness. By the time Sinsheimer became chancellor, things were starting to change. But now there's a real stress between the growth of the university and the community. It's a very legitimate issue from both sides and it is a stress point. And it does take chancellorial time. There's our growth into Silicon Valley; that takes a lot of chancellorial time. There's a lot of things that only the chancellor can do, because the chancellor carries the gravitas to do it.

There's fundraising. Again, we just finished a 300 million dollar campaign a couple of years ago. I'd love to tell you that I raised every single penny of that 330, whatever, 335 million dollars. Of course not. I was the closer on some of the bigger deals. But a lot of that was raised completely independent of me. It wasn't me. But on the other hand, I spent a lot of time on fundraising, because I set the stage and met with lots of donors. And again, for a lot of people, it's the chancellor who they want to talk to. And as a chancellor, I spent a lot of time in Sacramento meeting with people. And again, it's the chancellor who carries the weight there.

But for me, a significant bulk of time was spent relating to the rest of the UC system and to the Office of the President. Now that was a particular interest to me because of my senate chair background. It was both an interest and a strength, because I brought something to the table that could be valuable for the campus. But I think in today's world, it is increasingly important that the chancellor of a campus like Santa Cruz be seen as an influential chancellor in the Council of Chancellors. It is too easy to have your perspective dropped, or not to be considered, or to have the special circumstances of your own campus not play a role, if you're not vocal and respected. Sometimes it can be much more subtle

than that. I did a lot of subtle affecting of policy in ways that may not be completely obvious from the get-go, but where I had a long-term plan that changes in policy would benefit my particular campus.

But I won't say to you that everything I did was solely for the benefit of the campus. I'm actually a UC person, and I think I have a duty to UC writ large, not just to my own campus. But nevertheless, I certainly swayed things in a direction that I think is going to benefit Santa Cruz. And that takes an inordinate amount of time. In these pages, you've seen me on multiple regental or UCOP groups that I've served on over the years while chancellor. I've done that for a reason—both interest and feeling that it would be beneficial to the campus to do so. That's not something that the early chancellors had to do at all. I don't even think M.R.C. served on that many groups for UC, or for the regents. That isn't a putdown, that's only a statement that times have changed.

Reti: Even in the last fifteen years.

Blumenthal: That's right, even in that timeframe. Things have changed a lot and the role of the chancellor is very different.

The other way it's different is dealing with crises, dealing with things that crop up, whether it be strikes or student demonstrations, or other things that come up that you have to be ready to deal with. And you never know, day or night, when these are going to happen. Kelly and I used to joke about the number of late night calls I would get. That's a part of being the leader of a community that has 25,000 people associated with it. It's inevitable that stuff happens. That takes time and effort. And again, sometimes for certain things, only the chancellor can be the one, the face.

I haven't even mentioned things like the press, or stuff like that. But all of that tends to play into the role of chancellor in a way that was much simpler in the early days of the

campus. They had other problems, like developing the campus, building the campus, and having it make sense. And then recruiting an outstanding faculty. I'm not minimizing what the other chancellors did, by any means. I'm just saying it has evolved.

And I guess I would also say a little bit about the campus itself, both where we are, or where we've been and where we're going. Santa Cruz, we're what, fifty-four years old now? We're still quite young as a university. We started as a bold experiment. There is no question about it. There are aspects of our bold experiment which continue today, and continue successfully.

I think the colleges have been a success. It is true they've changed since the first days of the campus. I doubt if Dean McHenry were alive today that he would say that the colleges we have are necessarily exactly what he envisioned. But I hope he would say that he knew that they would evolve, and this is one of the evolutions that came out of it. That's what I hope he would feel.

And yes, we started with no grades and narrative evaluations. I was myself sad to see narrative evaluations go. Things do change. Not everything can remain as it was. We are a campus where people care so much, and so many people are reluctant to see change. Narrative evaluations were a great example of that. I did talk about that earlier. But sometimes things have to evolve with time. And in the case of narratives, the new generation of faculty was not going to buy into it. There are just certain realities. But what makes Santa Cruz so special is the spirit of being willing to try new things and go in new directions.

So I'm telling you there is a contradiction. On the one hand, we tend to hold onto things, be unwilling to change. But on the other hand, we have a spirit of wanting to try new things. It is somewhat contradictory, but that's what makes this place so interesting.

And you know, when we came up with—I didn't come up with, but I jumped to support it—this motto of Santa Cruz being the original authority on questioning authority, the reason I liked it so much was because yes, we have student demonstrations questioning authority. But that's not what it meant to me. It meant we questioned authority about what a university could be and how it could be organized. We had scholars who questioned authorities in their fields, and started whole new fields, and did things that people said couldn't be done. That's the kind of spirit that I see in Santa Cruz. And that's, to me, the core of what makes this place so special, is a willingness not to be influenced overly by what people have done before, a willingness to strike out in new directions, and the institutional freedom to let people do that. To me, that is the one special feature of Santa Cruz that is so very special. Yes, colleges are important, no question about it. But that willingness to try new things and to experiment, and understand that not all experiments are successful is what makes our campus special. You know, if you go through the pages of this history, you'll see that I tried a number of initiatives that were complete failures, or never got off the ground. I don't regret them for one minute because you have to take some risks in order to be successful. Some of them, I really wish they had paid off. It would have been great. But nevertheless, we would never have gotten anywhere if we weren't willing to take some risks. I think the willingness of the campus to try new things is so very important.

Reti: It is. That's beautifully said. As someone who's been here a long time and seen the place change, as it must, one of the things I'm concerned about is that as we have lost that original innovative structure—although we still have colleges, and have interdisciplinary programs—so some of it still exists. But how much is that willingness to try new things going to continue as we become more like other places?

Blumenthal: It's hard to do that as you grow, but that doesn't mean it's impossible. One of the key things about the strategic academic plan, one of the key legacies of Marlene Tromp's time here was setting up the initiatives that were fundamentally interdisciplinary in nature as a way of institutionalizing some of the interdisciplinary work that we've been doing through other mechanisms before. So to me, that was one of the exciting things about the strategic academic plan. We'll see how it works out. But it is tough to do. I still remember Sandy Faber once coming back from a visit to Harvard, where she was one of the board of overseers, their equivalent to regents. She came here for the meeting. I was chatting with her. She shook her head and she said, "I have never seen a place more stove-piped than Harvard University." She said, "It is amazing." And I believe it because that's a well-established university. Everyone does what they do very well and they stay in their lane. I think sometimes you have to drive out of the lanes.

Reti: Yes. So recognizing how precious what we have is here at UCSC. What you're providing is a reflection on what we've been able to carry forward of that spirit at this moment of transition as you've left office with so much history here, long before you ever became chancellor. I think that's an important reflection for people to read and think about.

Blumenthal: So I hope that the university continues to be open to change and new things, but that we stay true to some tradition. That openness to change is the tradition that I really most value for this campus. We have many other traditions. I love the banana slug. I would hate it if we ever changed that. But that, to me, is the most important thing.

Now I can't imagine we're ending this.

Reti: Well, George, it's been remarkable and deep and inspiring. Thank you.

Appendix:

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Commencement Address

U. S. Cellular Arena – 9 a.m., May 22, 2011

Welcome

- Thank you! I'm **deeply** honored to receive this honorary degree from my alma mater.
- (Playfully) Even though **I** didn't work nearly as hard for **this** degree as all of **you** did for the diplomas you'll receive today!
- Thank you, Chancellor Lovell, for the invitation to celebrate with you today.
- As you heard, I'm the chancellor of the University of California, Santa Cruz.
- More **importantly**, I am a **panther**!
- And I've been able to reconcile being a panther with my current university mascot, the fighting banana slugs.
- I am a **proud** graduate of UWM, Class of '66.
- UWM made an enormous difference in my life, and that's why it is such a pleasure and privilege to be with you here today.
- Welcome, and **congratulations** to the class of 2011!
- (Pause for applause)
- When I look out at you today, I can imagine what's on your minds:
 - I know that for parents and families, this is an emotional day. You're bursting with well-deserved pride—and probably shedding a few tears as well.
 - This is a milestone in **your** life, and in the life of your graduate.
 - They've achieved so much... you've helped them along the way... and you have **every reason** to feel proud of them!
 - **Congratulations!**
- For you **graduates**, I'm guessing you're feeling a **mixture** of emotions today.
 - Relief and euphoria at having finally finished.
 - And a **range** of feelings... from excitement to outright panic... about what comes next.
- So let's talk about that.

Euphoria and relief

- First, the euphoria
 - You're done!
 - No wonder you're feeling great!
- See if you can relate to this:
 - Early in my career, I was reading a student evaluation of my class, and I was so pleased, because she wrote that she had learned a lot in the course. She even said that if she had only **one** hour to live, she'd want to spend it in my class!
 - That sounded pretty good to me, right?
 - And then I kept reading, and she said... because every hour in your class **feels** like an **eternity**!
 - (pause for laughter)
 - So if you ever had a class that felt like it was never going to end, **those days are over!**

Anxiety and uncertainty

- But now, let's talk about what's **ahead** of you, and the **mix** of excitement and worry that you may be feeling...
- Some of you know **exactly** what you're doing next, and some of you **don't**.

- **Whatever** your next step is—whether it's graduate school, nonprofit work, military service, an internship, or a job—**let me tell you**: You have **already** taken the most important step toward a great future.
- You are joining an elite club today.
 - Only a **handful** of people in the world graduate from college.
 - And in the United States, only a **small** percentage graduate from a university of UWM's quality.

Confidence

- And yet, one of the biggest challenges college graduates face boils down to **confidence**.
 - It's natural, really, because most of you will leave here and face something entirely new and **different**.
- So here are **my** words of wisdom: In the face of that uncertainty, try not to dwell on the unknown. Instead, stop and reflect on what you've **accomplished**.
- It will help. **Really**. I speak from experience:
- When I went on to graduate school after UWM, I was **scared to death**.

- You see, I didn't come from a long line of academics. On the contrary, I was the first in my family to earn a college degree.
 - My parents owned a little venetian-blind shop on South Second Street.
- But they made it clear that both my sister and I were expected to go to college—she became a Panther, too.
 - And I'm grateful to my parents, because I truly discovered my path in life **right here** at UWM.
- When I applied to grad school, I looked at Madison, Harvard, Cornell, Cal Tech, and Berkeley.
- I ended up choosing UC San Diego.
 - In part because it had an excellent physics department, including a Nobel Prize winner... but it was also **close to the beach!** And it had a pretty good ratio of male-to-female students!
 - Remember, I was only 20 years old!
- But when I got there, I was **petrified!**
- I was surrounded by students from the top private universities in the country.
 - I wondered if I was as well-prepared as I needed to be to compete with them.
- By the end of my first quarter, I had learned that the education I got here at UWM was every bit as good as what students got at Harvard, Princeton, and MIT.
- That was decades ago, but it's still true today!
- The tricky thing about self-confidence is that it matters **so much**—but it's not always there when you need it the most!
- So, as you make this transition, remember that **you are among the best of the best.**

Good fortune and "ah ha" moments

- As graduates of a great public research university, you **have** what you need to be successful, because you've gotten a **well-rounded** education.
- One of this country's **greatest** strengths is that our universities help students learn how to **think** and **how to solve problems**.
 - Unlike many parts of Europe and Asia, where universities focus more on vocational training, in the United States, we prepare the whole person.
 - **Whether or not** you've been able to fully test this outside the university yet, you have learned how to take on new tasks and new challenges... how to **apply** yourself... how to set aside your ego and learn something new... and how to work **cooperatively** with other people.
 - **That's** what your UWM diploma tells people, including prospective employers!
- Beyond that, I hope you've had great moments of discovery here.
 - That's what I got at UWM.
 - I still remember my freshman English class, where I learned that great writing requires more than just **technique**. You have to have something of substance to say.
 - And I'll never forget what physics professor Bob **Greenler** did for me:
 - **He** gave a dorky 19-year-old who liked physics an internship to investigate "sun pillars"—a phenomenon no one really understood at the time.

- Our work produced a significant breakthrough, and Bob turned to me and said, "Do you realize that we know **more** about sun pillars than **anybody** else in the world?"
- That was an amazing moment--a true "ah ha!" moment.
- I know you've had epiphanies of your own, because that's what a high-quality college education is all about.
- The kind of education you've gotten here at UWM is why this country leads the world in science and engineering, in business, the arts, and medicine.
- **You**, right now, are as ready as anyone in the world to explore, to discover, to teach, to solve problems, and to lead others.

Call to action

- And now, here's something you may not have expected to hear about on your graduation day.
- This education you've just completed, this great system of public higher education that is the foundation of American leadership.... is under attack, and is at risk.
- So, in the spirit of giving back on this day of celebration, here's a responsibility you can take on as a new graduate:
- You can play a role in **preserving** America's great public universities.
- The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, like the University of California, Santa Cruz, is a **public** research university.
- These campuses are "**idea** factories," where people make discoveries that change our lives.
- They are "**opportunity** factories" that open doors for thousands of students every year.
 - In California—and probably Wisconsin and most other states--**two-thirds** of our state **legislators** attended one of our public colleges or universities
- Which is why it's galling to see so many elected officials turning their backs on our public universities—these awesome engines of opportunity and economic growth.
- Across the country, just as in Wisconsin, the quality of our public universities is being jeopardized by budget cuts.
- Now, I recognize that we are still in the throes of the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression.
 - And historians tell us that during tough times, people are **fearful** and more anxious.
 - We have a tendency to **retrench**.
 - But **not** always!
 - In 1862, in the darkest days of the Civil War, when it was unclear whether the Union would even survive... Abraham Lincoln **signed the law** that established this country's public university systems.
 - That **visionary** action set us on the road to economic development for the next 150 years!

- I told that story to a legislator in Sacramento a few weeks ago--a man who is **reluctant** to fund higher education.
- He has a big portrait of Lincoln in his office, but he didn't know this piece of our history.
- I was **happy** to fill in that gap!

Two steps you can take

- I would ask you to take two simple steps to make sure quality education is available for future generations:
 - Make a **donation** to this campus.
 - At UC Santa Cruz this spring, students launched a **student-to-student** fundraising drive.
 - They're asking each **graduating senior** to contribute \$20.11--2011--to fund scholarships for future students.
 - Second, make your voice heard.
 - Contact to your elected officials, and tell them about your own experience.
 - As graduates, your voices carry the weight of your **degree** and your **success**.
- It's vital, because the temptation to cut university budgets... to give in to short-term thinking ... is **real**.
 - You live in **Wisconsin!**
 - You've been in the **eye** of this storm.
 - And **now**, leaders of higher education like **me** are watching as both Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin system debate the future relationship of the Madison campus to the rest of the system.
- So, that's my message to you about giving back as you prepare to move on in your life.

Conclusion

- But let's come back to you and your future!
- I want to let you in on a secret: It's **really okay** if you have no idea what your next step is.
 - The truth about my own college "ah ha" moment?
 - I had **no clue** at the time how life-changing that would be for me.
- And if someone had told me when I was sitting in your seat that I'd end up the chancellor of a university, I would've said they were **nuts!**
- From where I stand **today**, though--with the advantage of a few years--let me wrap up by offering three pieces of advice, each somewhat paradoxical.
- Number one: Be **confident** in what you've learned, and **stay humble!**
 - There's a **lot** left to learn!
- Number two: Be **focused and persistent** about pursuing your goals, and yet remain **open** to unexpected opportunities!
 - Great careers are built with a combination of strong focus and serendipitous discovery.
- Number three: **Work hard** on whatever lies ahead, but also **take time out to think the big thoughts**.
 - Put your feet up now and then and **reflect** on what you're seeing, what you're learning, and the impacts you're having on the world.
- Graduating from college is a landmark occasion. This is a moment to savor.
- Take this gift of an excellent education and **go forth!** The world **really is** what you make it!
- I wish you **all** the best. Go out and make a difference!
- **Congratulations** to the Class of 2011!

Endnotes

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- ¹ <https://www.uchastings.edu/people/kelly-weisberg/>
- ² See Randall Jarrell and Irene Reti, *Karen Sinsheimer: A Life at UC Santa Cruz, 1981-1987* (Regional History Project, UC Santa Cruz, 2011). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8tt9n8pj>
- ³ See <https://guides.library.ucsc.edu/speccoll/seeds#s-lg-box-wrapper-27252278>
- ⁴ See: <https://vimeo.com/432621973>
- ⁵ See <https://www.starvedrocklodge.com/starved-rock-state-park/>
- ⁶ See <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1978/speedread/>
- ⁷ Julian Bond addressed the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Convocation at UC Santa Cruz in 2008. See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2008/02/1915.html>
- ⁸ Greenler, Robert G., Monte Drinkwine, A. James Mallmann, and George Blumenthal. "The Origin of Sun Pillars: A Computer Modeling Process Reveals a New Explanation for the Vertical Column of Light Sometimes Seen Passing through the Sun." *American Scientist* 60, no. 3 (1972): 292-302.
- ⁹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Copley_Press
- ¹⁰ See <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/chemistry/1998/summary/>
- ¹¹ See Caltech's oral history with Bill Frazer at https://oralhistories.library.caltech.edu/274/1/Frazer_W_OHO_final.pdf
- ¹² See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Burbidge
- ¹³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Burbidge
- ¹⁴ See: <https://www.astro.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=wmathews>
- ¹⁵ See <https://academicstree.org/physics/peopleinfo.php?pid=688551>
- ¹⁶ See <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/physics/1963/mayer/biographical/>
- ¹⁷ See <https://history.aip.org/phn/11605016.html>
- ¹⁸ *Lloyd Corporation, Ltd. v. Tanner*, 407 U.S. 551 (1972).
- ¹⁹ Clark Kerr was fired from his position as president of the University of California on January 20, 1967.
- ²⁰ See: https://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb0137614d/_1.pdf
- ²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakov_Zeldovich and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid_Sunyaev
- ²² See: <https://www.bu.edu/astronomy/profile/kenneth-brecher/>
- ²³ Riccardo Giacconi, Herbert Gursky, Frank R. Paolini, and Bruno Rossi, "Evidence for X Rays from Sources Outside the Solar System," *Physical Review Letters*, 9, 439. December 1, 1962.
- ²⁴ Cynthia Mathews is a well-known political figure in Santa Cruz County. She has served on the Santa Cruz City Council multiple times and also as mayor of Santa Cruz. For more on Cynthia Mathews see: https://localwiki.org/santacruz/Cynthia_Mathews
- ²⁵ For more on Albert Whitford see: Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Albert Whitford: Directorship of Lick Observatory, 1958-1968* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1995). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4t8949gc>
- ²⁶ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreste_Piccioni
- ²⁷ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raging_Slab
- ²⁸ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2015/05/robert-kraft-obituary.html>
- ²⁹ See: <https://www.astro.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=jsmiller>
- ³⁰ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Sands
- ³¹ For more on J. Herman Blake, Ralph Guzman, and the founding of Oakes College see: Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, "Look'n M' Face and Hear M' Story": *An Oral History with Professor J. Herman Blake*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4m01p3bz>
- ³² Bill Doyle is a professor (now emeriti) of biology and the founder of the Institute of Marine Sciences. See his two comprehensive books on UCSC history: *UC Santa Cruz: 1960-1991* and *The Origin of UC Santa Cruz* both available in the UCSC Library and for purchase online through Lulu.com.
- ³³ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2007/04/1156.html>
- ³⁴ <https://www.astro.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=dnlin>
- ³⁵ May Diaz was a professor of anthropology and served as the second provost of Kresge College.
- ³⁶ For more on Dave Kliger, who is a major figure in this oral history, see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor David Kliger* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/66q09369>
- ³⁷ See <http://scipp.ucsc.edu/personnel/profiles/primack.html>

- ³⁸ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Michael Nauenberg: Professor of Physics, 1966-1996*. (Regional History Project, UCSC, 2004). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9636r3cj>
- ³⁹ For a comprehensive, three-volume oral history by the Regional History Project with UCSC's founding chancellor, Dean McHenry, see <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/mchenry>
- ⁴⁰ Mark Christensen was UCSC's second chancellor and served from 1974 until 1976, for eighteen months. For a detailed history of the turmoil of the Christensen chancellorship see: Irene Reti, Editor, *UC Santa Cruz in a Time of Transition, Volumes I and II* at: <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/institutional-oral-history-of-the-university-of-california-santa-cruz>
- ⁴¹ See Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *For a More Humane World: A Family History of Professor Jasper Rose* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2020). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8m9346m7>
- ⁴² See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, F.M.G. Willson: Early UCSC History and the Founding of Stevenson College. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1989). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3rn6001j>
- ⁴³ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2015/05/bunnett-in-memorial.html>
- ⁴⁴ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Early UCSC History: Kenneth V. Thimann and the Founding of Crown College* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1997). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9cf8wofi>
- ⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elinor_Raas_Heller
- ⁴⁶ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2014/02/rosenblum.html>
- ⁴⁷ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Angus E. Taylor: UCSC Chancellorship, 1976-1977* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1998) Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/42j3c98r>
- ⁴⁸ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2013/05/hilgard-in-memorial.html>
- ⁴⁹ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Leading through Transitions and Turbulence: an Oral History with Executive Vice Chancellor R. Michael Tanner* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2019) Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8165t7k8>
- ⁵⁰ For more on Diane Lewis see: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2015/08/in-memorial-diane-lewis.html>. A brief oral history with Lewis is also part of the *Oakes College Oral History series* conducted in a UCSC class in 2015. This is available in the Special Collections Reading Room: LD781.S52 O25.
- ⁵¹ An oral history with Jim Gill is included in the volume *Oakes College: An Oral History*. Interviewer Roseanne Shensa. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5d37c5gz>
- ⁵² See the oral history with Don Rothman as part of *Oakes College: An Oral History* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011): Available in full text: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5d37c5gz>
- ⁵³ See "Rediscover: Herman Blake and Don Rothman - UCSC Reunion Weekend 2012." Available on Youtube at https://youtu.be/bsDW_M-NdtY
- ⁵⁴ Ray Charland is also in the Oakes College volume cited above.
- ⁵⁵ See <https://museoeduardocarrillo.org/>
- ⁵⁶ An oral history with Roberto Crespi is also in the Oakes College volume cited above.
- ⁵⁷ For an oral history with Nancy Stoller (Shaw) conducted by the Regional History Project as part of the Out in the Redwoods series see: https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/oir.exhibit/nancy_stoller
- ⁵⁸ See Randall Jarrell, *Robert Sinsheimer: Chancellor of UC Santa Cruz, 1977-1987* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1996). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/omp6n2rx>
- ⁵⁹ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Willis and <http://www.janwillis.net/index.htm>
- ⁶⁰ For more on Ron Saufley see: Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor, *Look'n M' Face and Hear M' Story: An Oral History with Professor J. Herman Blake* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014): <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4m01p3bz>
- ⁶¹ See <https://www.math.ucsc.edu/faculty-research/regular.php?uid=coop>
- ⁶² See <https://www.math.ucsc.edu/faculty-research/emeriti.php>
- ⁶³ See <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/santacruzsentinel/obituary.aspx?n=arthur-pearl&pid=189604863>
- ⁶⁴ See: <https://www.the-scientist.com/news/uc-santa-cruz-chemist-and-entrepreneur-wins-ac-s-award-for-molecular-modeling-60754>
- ⁶⁵ See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2018/11/talamantes-in-memorial.html>
- ⁶⁶ See <https://www.sacnas.org/>
- ⁶⁷ https://www.newspapers.com/clip/28870103/santa_cruz_sentinel/
- ⁶⁸ See: <https://chancellor.berkeley.edu/chancellors/dirks/biography>
- ⁶⁹ <https://blog.aspb.org/aspb-member-spotlight-lincoln-taiz/>
- ⁷⁰ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2007/01/1012.html>

⁷¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sucheng_Chan

⁷² See the oral history with David Anthony at Special Collections. This oral history was conducted by a student as part of an Oakes College oral history course: LD781.S52. For a list of Oakes College provosts see: <https://oakes.ucsc.edu/about/oakes-provosts-and-honorary-fellows.html>

⁷³ Reaggregation and Reorganization refer to the restructuring of UCSC in the late 1970s, which separated most of the academic functions from the colleges and re-clustered faculty according to disciplines. This was a significant departure from the original plan for UCSC. For more on this period see *Seeds of Something Different: An Oral History of UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2020).

⁷⁴ The Voting Rights Act Amendment of 1970 lowered the voting age in national elections to eighteen in all states after January 1, 1971.

⁷⁵ See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Mike Rotkin: The Rise and Fall of Community Studies at UCSC, 1969-2010* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013) Available in full text at:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4xp901f2>

⁷⁶ For more on the Lighthouse Field preservation battle see Kara Guzman, "Saving Lighthouse Field," *Good Times*, July 5. 2016. <https://goodtimes.sc/cover-stories/saving-lighthouse-field/>

⁷⁷ See Elizabeth Calciano and Randall Jarrell, *Page Smith: Founding Cowell College and UCSC, 1964-1973* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1996). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9hr6t6b3>

⁷⁸ Paul Lee was Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Religious Studies (founding chair), and the History of Consciousness, (Ph.D. program), 1966-72.

⁷⁹ See the oral history with Paul Lee as part of Maya Hegege, Interviewer; Editor Randall Jarrell, *The Early History of UC Santa Cruz's Farm and Garden Project* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2003). Full text available at: <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/farmgarden>

⁸⁰ See Cameron Vanderscoff, Interviewer and Editor; Irene Reti, Editor, *For a More Humane World: A Family Oral History of Professor Jasper Rose* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2020).:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8m9346m7>

⁸¹ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Kenneth V. Thimann: Early UCSC History and the Founding of Crown College* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1997):

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9cf8wof1>

⁸² See William Doyle's two books about UCSC's history: *UC Santa Cruz: 1960-1991* (2011) and *The Origin of UC Santa Cruz* (2015). Both are available in the UCSC Library.

⁸³ Donald Osterbrock, *Eye on the Sky: Lick Observatory's First Century* (UC Press, 2010).

⁸⁴ <http://www.mira.org/about.htm>

⁸⁵ See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Nelson_\(astronomer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Nelson_(astronomer))

⁸⁶ For more on Sandra Faber see: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/01/faber-gold-medal.html>

⁸⁷ See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *UCSC Professor Gary Griggs as Researcher, Teacher, and Institution Builder* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012).

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/21s8b7xc>

⁸⁸ See <http://scipp.ucsc.edu/personnel/profiles/dorfan.html>

⁸⁹ The UCSC Library's Special Collections Department houses the Gregory Bateson Papers. See:

<https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt029029gz/>

⁹⁰ For more on Angela Davis see: <https://histcon.ucsc.edu/faculty/emeriti.php?uid=aydavis>

⁹¹ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2004/04/484.html>

⁹² See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer; Irene Reti, Editor, *Karen Sinsheimer: Life at UC Santa Cruz, 1981-1987* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library). Available in full text at:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8tt9n8pj>

⁹³ De (D.A.) Clarke had a thirty-year career serving as a programmer analyst and software engineer for Lick Observatory.

⁹⁴ The J. Herman Blake Provost's House was dedicated on November 2, 2018. See

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=TlcjaYgVl24>

⁹⁵ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Robert Stevens: UCSC Chancellorship, 1987-1991*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library). Available in full text at:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/95h8k9wo>

⁹⁶ *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 US 479 (1965).

⁹⁷ Victor Kimura was one of UCSC's founding employees. He began his career at the UCSC accounting office in 1965. and was UCSC's first Asian American staff member. Kimura went on to serve as the campus budget director for many years. Kimura was born in Poston, the Japanese American internment camp. For more on the Kimura/Van Den Burg lawsuit see: <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/ca-court-of-appeal/1772570.html>

⁹⁸ For an obituary of Kivie Moldave see: <https://www.asbmb.org/asbmb-today/people/072720/alrubaye-wins-award-cameron-assumes-presidency-rem>

- ⁹⁹ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Professor Isebill "Ronnie" Gruhn: Recollections of UCSC, 1969-2013* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7hn0655w>
- ¹⁰⁰ Jack Michaelson is founding UCSC faculty in economics.
- ¹⁰¹ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *In the Beginning...and Beyond: Edward M. Landesman—Professor of Mathematics, UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2016). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9zx9n3bt>
- ¹⁰² See: <https://www.cmu.edu/uls/assets/levine-2019.pdf>
- ¹⁰³ For documents related to the history of the narrative evaluation system at UC Santa Cruz see: [https://senate.ucsc.edu/archives/Past Issues/narrative-evaluations/index.html](https://senate.ucsc.edu/archives/Past%20Issues/narrative-evaluations/index.html).
- ¹⁰⁴ See Randall Jarrell and Irene Reti, *From Complex Organisms to a Complex Organization: an Oral History with UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood, 1996-2004* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9hv2j5t9>
- ¹⁰⁵ See <https://people.ucsc.edu/~brogoff/>
- ¹⁰⁶ <http://www1.ucsc.edu/currents/99-00/01-24/nesforum1.html>
- ¹⁰⁷ Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *"It Became My Case Study": Michael Cowan's Four Decades at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3j5438d7>
- ¹⁰⁸ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Karl S. Pister, UCSC Chancellorship, 1991-1996* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2000). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7pn93507>
- ¹⁰⁹ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Adding a Plank to the Bridge: Julia Armstrong-Zwart's Leadership at UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/56h206hb>
- ¹¹⁰ In July 1995, the Regents of the University of California passed two landmark resolutions, Standing Policy 1 (SP1) and Standing Policy 2 (SP2), prohibiting "preferential treatment" on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, and national origin in admissions, employment, and contracting. These resolutions were followed by the passage of the 1996 voter initiative Proposition 209, which incorporated similar prohibitions into the California State Constitution, effective August 1998. After Proposition 209, SP1 and SP2, Student Affirmative Action was eliminated and SAA/EOP changed to EOP only.
- ¹¹¹ See Randall Jarrell, *Peter Scott, Professor of Physics, Recollections of UCSC, 1966-1994* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2005). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8787s3c9>
- ¹¹² Joe Calmes worked as Administrative Director for Lick Observatories at UC Santa Cruz for over twenty-seven years.
- ¹¹³ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2019/04/batalha-aas.html>
- ¹¹⁴ On October 17, 1989, at 5:04 p.m. a 7.1 magnitude earthquake on the San Andreas Fault shook the Central Coast of California and lasted for fifteen seconds. The quake's epicenter lay somewhat near Loma Prieta Peak in the Santa Cruz Mountains, about ten miles northeast of the city of Santa Cruz, California. This earthquake killed sixty-three people, injured 3,757 others, and caused an estimated six billion dollars in property damage. It was the largest earthquake to occur on the San Andreas fault since the great San Francisco earthquake in April 1906.
- ¹¹⁵ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Growth and Stewardship: 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>.
- ¹¹⁶ See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William L. Burke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_L._Burke)
- ¹¹⁷ See <https://www.astro.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=pbodenhe>
- ¹¹⁸ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2006/05/872.html>
- ¹¹⁹ <http://physics.ucsc.edu/people/faculty/brown.html>
- ¹²⁰ <http://physics.ucsc.edu/people/faculty/gaspari.html>
- ¹²¹ Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program implemented in 1994.
- ¹²² See the oral history with David Saxon conducted by the UCLA oral history program at: <https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/catalog/21198-zz0008znq7>
- ¹²³ For more on the history of the Human Genome Project at UCSC see: <https://ucscgenomics.soe.ucsc.edu/about/history/>
- ¹²⁴ See: <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/inmemoriam/html/eugene-cota-robles.html>
- ¹²⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven S. Vogt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_S._Vogt)
- ¹²⁶ See Kelly Weisberg, *Children of the Night: A Study of Adolescent Prostitution* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1985).
- ¹²⁷ Michael Drake succeeded Janet Napolitano as president of the University of California in 2020.
- ¹²⁸ See Betty Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter: The Harrowing True Story of a Mother's Courage* (St. Martin's Press, 1991).

- ¹²⁹ See Kelly Weisberg, *Domestic Violence: Legal and Social Reality* (Aspen Publishers, 2012) and Kelly Weisberg, editor, *Domestic Violence Report*, a national newsletter on domestic violence law and policy.
- ¹³⁰ See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Murray's Universe: An Oral History with UCSC Professor Murray Baumgarten, 1966-2014*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2014). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/21r987zw>
- ¹³¹ See <https://nlet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Hernandez-resume2016-1.pdf>
- ¹³² <https://keckobservatory.org/about/people/aimee-dorr-2/>
- ¹³³ See <https://news.ucsc.edu/2013/08/blumenthal-rossi.html>
- ¹³⁴ <https://people.ucsc.edu/~schung/>
- ¹³⁵ <http://www.ucolick.org/~koo/>
- ¹³⁶ See <https://histcon.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=freccero>
- ¹³⁷ https://danm.ucsc.edu/faculty/shelly_errington
- ¹³⁸ See <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/news/source/senatedirectorretires.june2008.html>
- ¹³⁹ “John Simpson was appointed as executive vice chancellor of UC Santa Cruz in summer 1998. Previously he was dean of arts and sciences at the University of Washington. A professor of psychology, he held a variety of academic and administrative posts there for 23 years prior to his arrival at UC Santa Cruz.” From: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2003/10/414.html>
- ¹⁴⁰ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alison_Galloway
- ¹⁴¹ <https://politics.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=meister>
- ¹⁴² <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/files/news/source/hershmaninterview.html>
- ¹⁴³ See the oral history with Helene Moglen: Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Helene Moglen and the Vicissitudes of a Feminist Administrator* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7fc7q3z8>
- ¹⁴⁴ <https://kresge.ucsc.edu/about/faculty-directory-page.php?uid=yellin>
- ¹⁴⁵ See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Teaching Writing in the Company of Friends: An Oral History with Carol Freeman* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2013). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3t26956c>
- ¹⁴⁶ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/07/quentin-williams-to-serve-as-interim-grad-studies-dean.html>
- ¹⁴⁷ See https://humanities.ucsc.edu/news-events/news/Dean-Apptmt_July-2011.html
- ¹⁴⁸ Mardi Wormhoudt was a major figure in Santa Cruz politics. She sat on the Santa Cruz City Council from 1981 to 1990, including during the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989. She served on the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors for twelve years.
- ¹⁴⁹ See: <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/people/c-judson-king-scd>
- ¹⁵⁰ Marlene Tromp served as executive vice chancellor/campus provost of UCSC from 2017-2019. See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2017/02/cpevc-tromp.html>
- ¹⁵¹ <https://literature.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=lau>
- ¹⁵² See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_C._Atkinson
- ¹⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_C._Dynes
- ¹⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ward_Connerly
- ¹⁵⁵ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bio/gayle-binion.html>
- ¹⁵⁶ <https://senate.ucsf.edu/2000-2001/biolpitts.html>
- ¹⁵⁷ See the oral history with Gomes at: https://ohc-search.lib.berkeley.edu/catalog/MASTER_1476
- ¹⁵⁸ For more on the history of the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems and organic farming research at UC Santa Cruz see *Cultivating a Movement: An Oral History of Organic Farming and Sustainable Agriculture on California's Central Coast* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2011). <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/cultiv/home>
- ¹⁵⁹ Larry Pageler is an alum of UCSC (environmental studies) and for thirty-five years served as transportation planner for the campus. He retired in 2020. See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2018/12/taps-interim-director.html>
- ¹⁶⁰ See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Post_\(law_professor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Post_(law_professor))
- ¹⁶¹ See: http://apahenational.org/?page_id=5427
- ¹⁶² George Blumenthal added the following comment during the review of this transcript in 2020: “The policy developed by the aforementioned task force (which incidentally included Robert Post from Yale Law School) did recommend adoption of a policy very close to what I suggested above – academic freedom rights for non-faculty academics that are guaranteed by the Academic Senate but with the caveat that these academics are still responsible for doing their job. After review by the full senate, these recommendations were adopted by Provost Brown as a new APM section 011.”
- ¹⁶³ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wen_Ho_Lee
- ¹⁶⁴ See: <http://www.ucolick.org/~max/>
- ¹⁶⁵ See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Bruce_Tarter
- ¹⁶⁶ <https://www.wagingpeace.org/retired-adm-foley-will-oversee-labs-for-uc/>

- 167 See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2003/02/297.html>
- 168 <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-affairs/immediate-office-staff/Bios/michael-brown.html>
- 169 <http://adminrecords.ucsd.edu/Notices/2017/2017-4-4-1.html>
- 170 <https://www.ppic.org/person/joanne-kozberg/>
- 171 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Yudof
- 172 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Napolitano
- 173 <https://uccs.ucdavis.edu/about/advisory-board/stephen-a-arditti>
- 174 See <https://chancellor.ucmerced.edu/about-office/past-chancellors/tomlinson-keasey>
- 175 <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bio/john-oakley.html>
- 176 <https://www.pointsoflight.org/awards/ceil-cirillo/>
- 177 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Scott_\(California_politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Scott_(California_politician))
- 178 <https://physics.ucdavis.edu/people/faculty/joseph-kiskis>
- 179 “‘Self-Reliance’ is an 1841 essay written by American transcendentalist philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson. It contains the most thorough statement of one of Emerson's recurrent themes: the need for each individual to avoid conformity and false consistency, and follow his own instincts and ideas. It is the source of one of Emerson's most famous quotations: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-Reliance>
- 180 <https://theqacommons.org/commons-staff/ralph-wolff/>
- 181 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_N._Vanderhoef
- 182 <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/people/ellen-switkes>
- 183 <https://doloreshuerta.org/dolores-huerta/>
- 184 <https://chancellor.berkeley.edu/chancellors/birgeneau>
- 185 <http://mafox.ucsd.edu/>
- 186 <https://preuss.ucsd.edu/about-preuss/about-peter-and-peggy-preuss.html>
- 187 <https://www.lbl.gov/nobelists/1997-steve-chu/>
- 188 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_M._Marcus
- 189 <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2005/05/6249/longtime-ucsf-staff-advocate-join-board-regents-july>
- 190 <https://ph.ucla.edu/news/multimedia/video/dwaine-b-duckett-vp-human-resources-uc-office-president>
- 191 <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/sherry-lansing.html>
- 192 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/09/aps-fellows.html>
- 193 Marty Chemers was acting chancellor of UC Santa Cruz from 2004-2005.
- 194 See: <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/uc-regents-endorse-commission-report>
- 195 Michael Corleone in “The Godfather III”
- 196 <https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2018-07/Schevitz.pdf>
- 197 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerry_Parsky
- 198 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Larry_N._Vanderhoef
- 199 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_C._Doby
- 200 See <https://chancellor.ucsb.edu/about>
- 201 See: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-nov-05-me-uc5-story.html>
- 202 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Hawley
- 203 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linda_Katehi
- 204 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rory_Hume
- 205 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2006/08/925.html>
- 206 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_E._Walsh
- 207 <https://baas.aas.org/pub/david-burstein-1947-2009/release/1>
- 208 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bradford_A._Smith
- 209 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_O._Abell
- 210 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Greeley
- 211 <http://www.jeff-hester.com/about-dr-hester/>
- 212 <https://physicstoday.scitation.org/doi/10.1063/1.3518198>
- 213 <https://barnard.edu/profiles/laura-kay>
- 214 https://physics.weber.edu/palen/Site/Stacy_Palen%27s_Homepage.html
- 215 As of summer 2020, Stacy and I have completed the fourth edition of *Understanding our Universe*, and we’ve already begun work on the seventh edition of *21st Century Astronomy*—George Blumenthal.
- 216 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2011/02/tom-vani-retiring.html>
- 217 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France_A._Córdova
- 218 http://www.smartvoter.org/2003/11/04/ca/stn/vote/johnson_o/bio.html
- 219 <http://fhdafiles.fhda.edu/downloads/homefhda/KingResume.pdf>
- 220 <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/20130115/ucscs-donna-blitzer-to-head-santa-cruz-chamber>

- ²²¹ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Harold A. Hyde: Recollections of Santa Cruz County* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2002). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5rq98388>
- ²²² For more discussion of UCSC's involvement in the Fort Ord conversion see Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Henry J. Mello: A Life in California Politics* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2000). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9n34j8qv> and Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Congressmember Sam Farr: A Life of Public Service* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2017). Available in full text at: <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/samfarr>
- ²²³ https://www.montereycountyweekly.com/people/face_to_face/michael-houlemard/article_05d21e7c-243c-11ea-8687-ab3f32648b6e.html
- ²²⁴ See the oral history with John Laird, which is part of the Out in the Redwoods project at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3289v4jt>
- ²²⁵ <https://www.soe.ucsc.edu/people/larrabee>
- ²²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryan_Coonerty
- ²²⁷ For more on UCSC's long range development plans see: <https://lrdp.ucsc.edu/>
- ²²⁸ <https://www.sacbee.com/opinion/california-forum/article195004704.html>
- ²²⁹ <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/j.michael.bishop>
- ²³⁰ <https://hausslergenomics.ucsc.edu/people/david-haussler/>
- ²³¹ <https://mcd.ucsc.edu/faculty/bowman.html>
- ²³² <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/01/jack-baskin-in-memori.html>
- ²³³ <https://baskinfoundation.org/about-the-foundation/board-of-directors/peggy-d-baskin/>
- ²³⁴ See <https://library.ucsc.edu/giving/endowments/anne-neufeld-levin-holocaust-studies-collection-endowment>
- ²³⁵ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2013/10/blumenthal-luther.html>
- ²³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katherine_Lapp
- ²³⁷ <https://currents.ucsc.edu/06-07/07-17/dean.asp>
- ²³⁸ <https://currents.ucsc.edu/05-06/05-22/humanities.asp>
- ²³⁹ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2006/02/810.html>
- ²⁴⁰ <https://currents.ucsc.edu/99-00/05-08/hernandez.html>
- ²⁴¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gretchen_Kalonji
- ²⁴² <https://news.ucsc.edu/tuesday-newsday/2015/october-06/index.html>
- ²⁴³ Ansel Adams was UCSC's first photographer. See the collections of his images of the campus at <https://digitalcollections.library.ucsc.edu/collections/2f75rb6op?locale=en>
- ²⁴⁴ <https://www.storbeckpimentel.com/our-team/details/alberto-pimentel/>
- ²⁴⁵ <https://www.cityonahillpress.com/2011/11/03/meet-the-regents-eddie-island/>
- ²⁴⁶ <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/richard-blum.html>
- ²⁴⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kareem_Abdul-Jabbar
- ²⁴⁸ <https://reynagrande.com/>
- ²⁴⁹ <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bio/mary-croughan.html>
- ²⁵⁰ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/debora-oblew-b344aa19>
- ²⁵¹ <https://dailybruin.com/2017/12/04/uclas-vice-chancellor-to-leave-position-to-join-organization-for-arts>
- ²⁵² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK190075/>
- ²⁵³ <https://chancellor.ucr.edu/biography>
- ²⁵⁴ <https://chancellor.ucla.edu/about/chancellor/>
- ²⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_P._White
- ²⁵⁶ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/03/delaney-retirement.html>
- ²⁵⁷ <https://www.ali.org/members/member/426760/>
- ²⁵⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avishai_Dekel
- ²⁵⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Sue_Coleman
- ²⁶⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_D._Grey
- ²⁶¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Inouye
- ²⁶² <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/hadi-makarechian.html>
- ²⁶³ See Randall Jarrell, Interviewer and Editor, *Clark Kerr and the Founding of UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1989). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9bw645n9>
- ²⁶⁴ See Clark Kerr, *The Gold and the Blue: a Personal Memoir of the University of California, 1949-1967: Volume I* (University of California Press, 2001).
- ²⁶⁵ See <http://texts.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb238nbofs&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00036&toc.depth=1&toc.id=>

- 266 See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_S._Saxon
- 267 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_P._Gardner
- 268 <https://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2002/10/tien.html>
- 269 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_C._Atkinson
- 270 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_C._Dynes
- 271 See <https://lrdp.ucsc.edu/final-clrdp.shtml>
- 272 <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/us/peter-douglas-defender-of-california-coast-dies-at-69.html>
- 273 <https://steveblank.com/category/california-coastal-commission/>
- 274 See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *From the Ground Up: UCSC Professor Gary Griggs as Researcher, Teacher, and Institution Builder* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012). Available in full text at: [http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/21s8b7xc?query=regional history project](http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/21s8b7xc?query=regional+history+project)
- 275 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Potter_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Potter_(politician))
- 276 <https://www.cityonahillpress.com/2018/05/03/get-a-clue-santa-cruz-vs-the-lrdp/>
- 277 <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-legal/attorneys-staff/bios/charles-f-robinson.html>
- 278 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2014/04/counsel-troncoso.html>
- 279 <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-legal/attorneys-staff/bios/lorena-penaloz.html>
- 280 <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-legal/attorneys-staff/bios/kelly-l.-drumm.html>
- 281 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sue_Desmond-Hellmann
- 282 <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/mark.laret>
- 283 <https://profiles.ucsf.edu/sam.hawgood>
- 284 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2012/02/goldstein-profile.html>
- 285 <https://www.voiceamerica.com/guest/34647/tobey-fitch>
- 286 <https://trellis.law/judge/paul.p.burdick>
- 287 <https://a29.asmdc.org/biography>
- 288 <https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/118601-?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0>
- 289 <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Home/Components/News/News/1563/36?arch=1>
- 290 Neal Coonerty was the Third District Supervisor for Santa Cruz County. He served two terms on the Board of Supervisors. He was elected in 1990 to the Santa Cruz City Council, where his one term included a year as mayor. Also see Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Neal Coonerty & Bookshop Santa Cruz: An Oral History of Forty-Six Years of Independent Bookselling* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2012). Available at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8tc4z47b>
- 291 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_L._Leopold
- 292 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2017/07/avc-ppdo.html>
- 293 <https://lrdp.ucsc.edu/>
- 294 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2012/08/bas-appointment.html>
- 295 <https://envs.ucsc.edu/about/staff.php?uid=ckrohn>
- 296 <https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Government/BoardofSupervisors/District3.aspx>
- 297 <https://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/Government/BoardofSupervisors/District5.aspx>
- 298 The Regional History Project is part of the University Library.
- 299 See the oral history with Allan [Lan] Dyson: Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Allan J. Dyson: Managing the UCSC Library, 1979-2003* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2003). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3nj8fo76>.
- 300 <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/john-perez.html>
- 301 See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *A Different Model for the UCSC Colleges: Colleges Nine and Ten, An Oral History with Deana Slater and Wendy Baxter* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2018). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9r6928sq>
- 302 Conn Hallinan directed the journalism program at UCSC for twenty-three years, and won the UCSC Alumni Association's Distinguished Teaching Award, as well as UCSC's Innovations in Teaching Award, and Excellence in Teaching Award. He also served as Kresge College provost and retired in 2004.
- 303 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wlad_Godzich
- 304 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2008/04/2093.html>
- 305 <https://scicom.ucsc.edu/about/program-news-articles/2016-04-pulitzer.html>
- 306 See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *The UCSC Arboretum: A Grand Experiment* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2007). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/958665h4>
- 307 For more on the Science Communication Program see Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Creating a World-Class Graduate Program on a Unique Campus: An Oral History with John Wilkes, Founder of UC Santa Cruz's Science Communication Program*. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2015). Available in full text at: <https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/creating-a-world-class-graduate-program-on-a-unique-campus-an-oral-history-with-john-wilkes>. For the story of the Science Illustration Program see Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *Teaching is New Every Day: An Oral History of Science*

Illustration Teacher-Administrators Jenny Keller and Ann Caudle. (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2018). Available in full text at: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/47v1f16m>.

³⁰⁸ <https://politics.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=rripsch>

³⁰⁹ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2016/09/webster-foundation-healthy-planet.html>

³¹⁰ <https://www.rachelcarson.org/>

³¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pete_McCloskey

³¹² Mark Headley was also a major donor for the Regional History Project's book *Seeds of Something Different: An Oral History of UC Santa Cruz*. For more on Headley see:

<https://www.conservationlands.org/markheadley>

³¹³ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2019/05/keith-brant-retiring.html>

³¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narinder_Singh_Kapany

³¹⁵ Narinder Singh Kapany died December 4, 2020.

³¹⁶ Jack Baskin died January 14, 2020 and Peggy Baskin died July 24, 2020.

³¹⁷ <https://connect.ucsc.edu/maitra2010>

³¹⁸ For more on the Campaign for UCSC's fiftieth anniversary see:

<http://50years.ucsc.edu/thenext50/>

³¹⁹ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2018/07/academic-plan-for-our-future.html>

³²⁰ <http://www.mossgroup.com/richard-moss>

³²¹ <https://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/stories/2010/06/21/story3.html>

³²² <http://www.flycommunications.com/people/>

³²³ See Cameron Vanderscoff and Irene Reti, *Student Interviews: Fifty Years Later* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2018). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3k73500j>

³²⁴ <https://eps.ucsc.edu/faculty/Profiles/emeriti.php?uid=glatz>

³²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pete_Worden

³²⁶ <https://www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/kanter.html>

³²⁷ <https://magazine.scu.edu/magazines/winter-2010/a-last-goodbye-to-paul-locatelli-s-j/>

³²⁸ <https://lofgren.house.gov/>

³²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Rangel

³³⁰ <https://www.nasa.gov/ames/center-director-eugene-tu>

³³¹ <https://eshoo.house.gov/>

³³² https://www.nasa.gov/about/highlights/bolden_bio.html

³³³ <https://www.scu.edu/president/past-presidents/michael-e-engh-sj/>

³³⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Engh

³³⁵ <https://www.svlg.org/carl-guardino-available-for-questions-and-comments-on-innovation-economy/>

³³⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Packard

³³⁷ <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/seed/get-involved/coach/current-coaches/ken-kannappan>

³³⁸ <https://siliconvalleystrong.org/roundtable/>

³³⁹ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2007/08/1526.html>

³⁴⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ira_Ruskin

³⁴¹ <https://sd25.senate.ca.gov/>

³⁴² <https://a24.asmdc.org/>

³⁴³ <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/people/judy-miner-edd>

³⁴⁴ <http://secteam.com/about/our-team/>

³⁴⁵ https://www.auditor.ca.gov/aboutus/state_auditor

³⁴⁶ <https://www.latimes.com/people/teresa-watanabe>

³⁴⁷ <https://leadership.ucdavis.edu/people/ralph-hexter>

³⁴⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monica_C._Lozano

³⁴⁹ <https://chancellor.uci.edu/about/>

³⁵⁰ Janet Napolitano became the 20th president of the University of California on September 30, 2013.

Napolitano had served as Secretary of Homeland Security from 2009 to 2013 Napolitano introduced the Undocumented Students Initiative, which provides UC campuses with funding to address undocumented students' unique needs through a range of support services, including academic and personal counseling, financial aid and legal advising. See: <http://undoc.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

³⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betsy_DeVos

³⁵² See <https://www.keckobservatory.org/>

³⁵³ <http://www.ucolick.org/~bolte/homeworking.html>

³⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Lou_Chameau

³⁵⁵ <http://www.srl.caltech.edu/personnel/ecs/bio.html>

³⁵⁶ <https://www.ppic.org/person/peter-j-taylor/>

³⁵⁷ <https://www.gps.caltech.edu/people/edward-m-stolper>

³⁵⁸ <https://www.caltech.edu/about/news/remembering-tom-tombrello-44037>

- 359 https://keckobservatory.org/keck_observatory_director_taft_armandroff_to_step_down/
- 360 <https://www.keckobservatory.org/about/people/>
- 361 Michael Drake became president of the University of California in 2020. See: <https://www.ucop.edu/president/>
- 362 On March 11, 2011 an 8.9 earthquake off the coast of Japan brought a tsunami to Hawaii and then to the Santa Cruz Yacht Harbor, among other places on the West Coast. The tsunami caused 20 million dollars in damage in Santa Cruz. See: <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/community/emergency-management/recovery/sc-disaster-history>
- 363 See: [https://www.moore.org/article-detail?newsUrlName=keck-observatory-completes-\\$4-million-adaptive-optics-fund](https://www.moore.org/article-detail?newsUrlName=keck-observatory-completes-$4-million-adaptive-optics-fund)
- 364 <https://eps.ucsc.edu/faculty/Profiles/fac-only.php?uid=plkoch>
- 365 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Honda
- 366 <http://www.astro.ucla.edu/~tt/Welcome.html>
- 367 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/04/art-torres-alumni-regent.html>
- 368 <http://lanting.com/>
- 369 See: <https://www.eastmeadowaction.org/>
- 370 An extensive colorful history of Elfland and the Elfland protests, as well as a map of Elfland, can be found in Jeffrey Arnett, *An Unnatural History of UCSC* (Second edition) Santa Cruz, Calif.: Bay Tree Bookstore, 2008).
- 371 <https://www.cityonahillpress.com/2019/01/17/uc-regents-discuss-student-housing-west/>
- 372 <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/lark-park.html>
- 373 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Monning
- 374 <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/about/members-and-advisors/bios/michael-cohen.html>
- 375 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bud_Colligan
- 376 <https://mbep.biz/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Kates-Opening-Remarks-SOTR-2020.pdf>
- 377 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2008/01/1914.html>
- 378 <https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/economic-development>
- 379 <https://psychology.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=psylaw>
- 380 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_H._Wu
- 381 See the appendix for this speech.
- 382 In reference to the popular television series “Game of Thrones”
- 383 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2020/01/faber-gold-medal.html>
- 384 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vera_Rubin
- 385 https://www.ted.com/speakers/enrico_ramirez_ruiz
- 386 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Shultz
- 387 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Drell
- 388 <https://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-uc-regent-pattiz-retire-20171228-story.html>
- 389 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-feb-02-me-sbriefs2.2-story.html>
- 390 On June 6, 1978, California’s voters passed Proposition 13, reducing property tax rates on homes, businesses and farms, and freezing them at the 1976 assessed value. Proposition 13 also limited tax increases on any given property to no more than 2 percent per year, as long as the property was not sold. Voters backed Proposition 13 in large part because they felt that older Californians should not be priced out of their homes through high taxes. This proposition marked a turning point in California’s economic history, as markedly less money now flowed into public schools and governmental agencies.
- 391 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sally_Ride
- 392 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Hawley
- 393 <https://www.cfa.harvard.edu/do/alcock.html>
- 394 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Louise_Trimble
- 395 Proposition 30, officially titled Temporary Taxes to Fund Education, was a California ballot measure that was approved by California voters at the statewide election on November 6, 2012. The initiative increased taxes to prevent six billion dollars in cuts to the education budget for California state schools.
- 396 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty_Schweickart
- 397 <https://giving.ucsc.edu/donor-profiles/sharing-their-vision/>
- 398 <https://www.ppic.org/person/lande-ajose/>
- 399 Lori Kletzer was appointed executive vice chancellor under Chancellor Cynthia Larive: <https://cpevc.ucsc.edu/about/index.html>
- 400 https://campusdirectory.ucsc.edu/cd_detail?uid=brenneis
- 401 https://campusdirectory.ucsc.edu/cd_detail?uid=olof
- 402 <https://www.chemistry.ucsc.edu/faculty/emeriti.php?uid=joek>
- 403 <https://academicaffairs.ucsc.edu/about/biography.html>
- 404 <https://people.ucsc.edu/~schung/>

- 405 <https://astronomy.fas.harvard.edu/people/lars-hernquist>
- 406 <https://chancellor.ucsd.edu/chancellor-khosla>
- 407 <https://chancellor.ucr.edu/biography>
- 408 <https://www.ucop.edu/financial-accounting/peggy-arrivas-bio.html>
- 409 <https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/bio/william-jacob.html>
- 410 <http://rdynes.ucsd.edu/files/dynes-power-of-10.pdf>
- 411 <https://www.huronconsultinggroup.com/>
- 412 <https://chancellor.ucmerced.edu/about-office/past-chancellors/leland>
- 413 <https://chancellor.berkeley.edu/chancellor-christ/biography>
- 414 See <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/mar18/c4attach.pdf>
- 415 <https://chancellor.uci.edu/about/>
- 416 <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/our-faculty/faculty-profiles/erwin-chemerinsky/>
- 417 California's Assembly Bill 540 was signed into law by Governor Gray Davis on October 12, 2001, allowing access to in-state tuition rates for undocumented and other eligible students at California's public colleges and universities. The law allows students who attended high school in California, among other eligibility requirements, to pay in-state tuition fees instead of out-of-state tuition at California's public institutions of higher education, including the University of California, California State University, and California Community colleges. The law has been important in the pursuit of college accessibility for undocumented students in California.
- 418 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fabian_Núñez
- 419 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibor_Basri
- 420 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2008/01/1875.html>
- 421 <https://www.thepreussfoundation.org/copy-of-about>
- 422 <https://diversity.ucsc.edu/about/cdo-ss.html>
- 423 See: <https://www.diversitycenter.org/calendar/2018/6/14/20th-annual-rainbow-ceremony-queer-trans-graduation>
- 424 <https://news.ucsc.edu/2007/10/1613.html>
- 425 <https://specialevents.ucsc.edu/events/mlk/2020/tony-hill-award-nomination>
- 426 <https://www.innerlightministries.com/about-us/rev-deborah-johnson/>
- 427 UC Santa Cruz qualified as a Hispanic Serving Institution in 2015. See: <https://hsi.ucsc.edu/about/faq.html>
- 428 <https://socialsciences.ucsc.edu/news-events/archives/2011-2013/ronald.gonzales.htmls>
- 429 See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Telling UC Santa Cruz's Story: An Oral History with Public Affairs Director, Jim Burns, 1984-2014* (Regional History Project, UC Santa Cruz Library, 2016). <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3gf2t45j>
- 430 <https://goodtimes.sc/santa-cruz-news/changes-santa-cruz-sentinel/>
- 431 <https://fishrap.live>
- 432 <https://arts.ucsc.edu/dean/martin-berger>
- 433 After Blumenthal's retirement, an extended graduate student strike did close the campus. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_Santa_Cruz_graduate_students%27_strike and <https://payusmoreucsc.com>.
- 434 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Cicerone
- 435 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geoffrey_Marcy
- 436 <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/home>
- 437 <https://cshe.berkeley.edu/people/robert-c-may-o>
- 438 <https://gailhershatter.sites.ucsc.edu/>
- 439 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darrell_Long
- 440 <https://www.soe.ucsc.edu/people/leferrar>
- 441 <https://archive.csUMB.edu/fall2008/x12034.html>
- 442 <http://www.fora.org/Reports/Resolutions/2019/19-14.pdf>
- 443 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_T._Oliver
- 444 <https://ucnrs.org/reserves/fort-ord-natural-reserve/>
- 445 <https://envs.ucsc.edu/faculty/index.php?uid=dpress>
- 446 <https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/may.pdf>
- 447 See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Stephen R. Gliessman: Alfred E. Heller Professor of Agroecology, UC Santa Cruz* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2010). Available in full text at <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/oq88w50t>
- 448 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Willetts
- 449 Brexit refers to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in 2020.
- 450 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashid_Sunyaev
- 451 See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2017/09/times-higher-ed.html>

⁴⁵² Kelly and I did tour St Petersburg and Moscow later, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was starting—George Blumenthal.

⁴⁵³ <https://news.ucsc.edu/2016/11/admissions-vets.html>

⁴⁵⁴ <https://www.soe.ucsc.edu/people/getoor>

⁴⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liu_Yandong

⁴⁵⁶ <https://ic3institute.org/team/mr-ganesh-kohli/>

⁴⁵⁷ Subsequent to retiring, Blumenthal joined the IC3 board of directors at Ganesh's urging.

⁴⁵⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_Pulaski

⁴⁵⁹ The Mission Bell was removed in a ceremony led by the Amah Mutsun in partnership with the UCSC campus on June 22, 2019. See: <https://news.ucsc.edu/2019/06/mission-bell.html>

⁴⁶⁰ See Sarah Rabkin, Interviewer and Editor, *"An Intergenerational Community of Friends": An Oral History of the Page and Eloise Smith Scholastic Society/Smith Renaissance Society with Bill Dickinson and Gary Miles* (Regional History Project, UC Santa Cruz Library, 2021). Available in full text at:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6hw978p9>

⁴⁶¹ Cynthia K. Larive was confirmed as the eleventh Chancellor of University of California Santa Cruz by the UC Board of Regents on May 16, 2019. She began her tenure on July 1, 2019.

<https://chancellor.ucsc.edu/about/>

Interviewer and Editor: Irene Reti directs the Regional History Project at the UC Santa Cruz Library, where she has worked as an editor and oral historian since 1989. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies and a Master's in History from UCSC and is also a small press publisher, writer, and photographer. Reti retired from the Regional History Project shortly after the publication of this oral history.