

TRANSCRIPTION RE:

**CSUMB Founding Faculty
Oral History Project 1995-98**

**Interview with Marsha Moroh, Professor Emerita
Former Dean, College of Science**

**Interviewer, Christine Sleeter, Professor Emerita
Teacher Education**

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Narrator: Marsha Moroh

Interviewer: Christine Sleeter

1 Sleeter: We're live! This is Christine Sleeter interviewing Marsha Moroh on Thursday, August 27,
2 2017, at the home of Christine Sleeter. Marsha, could you state your name?

3 Moroh: Marsha Moroh

4 Sleeter: And do I have your permission to record you?

5 Moroh: Yes.

6 Sleeter: Okay. So, Marsha, tell me about why you came to CSUMB.

7 Moroh: There were a couple of reasons. First of all, I had been teaching for 25 years in New York
8 at the City University and I was really frustrated with the bureaucracy and the way they did things there. I
9 had actually been looking for an interesting new opportunity. Then I got this purple piece of paper in the
10 mail which was so California. It had the Vision Statement on it and there were a couple of things that really
11 stuck out for me. One was the "community of people teaching and learning from one another in an
12 atmosphere of trust and mutual respect," to which I said "Hmm, that could be great!" Then, about the
13 living learning community, about the fact that there would be a bunch of families starting a new
14 community. I had two young children at the time and I felt what a wonderful opportunity for them to grow
15 up in a sort of university town. The other motivation to get out of New York was that winter there were 23
16 snow storms and I was commuting on the road. I didn't think I would live through another one of those
17 winters driving on icy freeways. I kept thinking it was just a matter of time. But the challenge of starting
18 something new was, I think, the thing that got me. A chance to do it right, profiting from all the mistakes I
19 had seen around me, I thought was the most exciting part of it.

20 Sleeter: There's still kind of a leap of faith there because you had your job. I forget what your
21 husband, Kenny was doing.

22 [2:46] Moroh: He was doing consulting work.

23 Sleeter: So he wasn't rooted.

24 Moroh: Not really. No, he really wasn't. I was the one that was working most of the time, he had a
25 lot of the childcare as well. So he spent a lot of time with the kids. He was okay anywhere because he was a
26 software developer so he could develop software anywhere. So he was fine with it.

27 Sleeter: Okay. And the girls were how old?

28 Moroh: Five and seven. So a kindergartner and a second grader.

29 Sleeter: That's uprooting them a little bit.

30 Moroh: It's uprooting them a lot but we figured it's better to do it when they're really young then
31 to pull them out once they've really settled in and made friends. So the little one was a kindergartner and
32 the other one was in second grade. We were living out on Shelter Island. They were in this little school. But
33 the other piece is that that was a community with almost no diversity and I always felt that the kids would. .
34 . . They had already had some racial incidents in the school. . .

35 Sleeter: Racial incidents? Assume I don't know what you are talking about.

36 [4:09] Moroh: Okay, so my little one, she was in kindergarten and she came home. . .

37 Sleeter: Let's see. You're white and Jewish.

38 Moroh: Right. I'm white and Jewish and the girls are Indian. So their skin is brown. So the little
39 one was in kindergarten and she said an older boy came into class and "He's making fun of my skin." She
40 says, "I don't know why he's making fun of my skin. His skin is all pimples and blotches and everything.
41 Why is he making fun of my skin?" She told me a few times. I went to the teacher and complained. She
42 talked to the kid and the kid I guess didn't realize she was being insulted and he apologized and brought her
43 a valentine and all sorts of things like that. But it was hard for her. Then I remember my older one came

44 home one day and said a little girl said to her “You have brown skin and I don't want to play with a kid
45 with brown skin.” So I called the kid’s mother and I said, “Do you know what your daughter said to my
46 daughter?” And the mother said, “Well, that’s just the way my daughter is. Yesterday she said to another
47 little girl, ‘You have a red dress on and I don't want to play with a girl with a red dress on.’” So I said,
48 “Well, it’s a little different because the little girl can change her dress but my daughter can’t change her
49 skin.” And the mother just blew it off. So I just felt like I needed to find a community where there was
50 some diversity and my kids would be accepted. So part of the Vision Statement spoke to me about that as
51 well. So, it was really a personal thing, too.

52 Sleeter: Did you feel like there were costs associated with leaving? Especially maybe job-related
53 costs?

54 [5:50] Moroh: Well, I'm very risk averse. So I actually took a two year leave of absence. I am one of the
55 few people probably in the world who had tenure in two different places for two solid years while I figured
56 it out. So, I did not really burn any bridges. We rented out a house. We actually had two houses. We rented
57 them both out. We kept the path open for coming back. That’s just the way I am. So I didn’t feel really that
58 much risk because I kept feeling that I could come back. Even though I knew in my heart I probably never
59 would, I just wanted to leave the door open, so it wasn’t so hard.

60 Sleeter: Think back to the coming here and what you expected and what you encountered when you
61 got here. How did those go together or not go together?

62 Moroh: First of all, one of the things I wanted to do was to be able to spend more time with my
63 family. When I saw where the housing was. . . . I kind of knew what the place would look like because I
64 came out here for an interview and I knew that the area was lovely and the campus was hideous, because at
65 that time there was nothing here except abandoned buildings. I mean really nothing. And a few sort of
66 desultory renovations underway. So I kind of knew that. But I looked at where the housing was and where
67 the campus was and I said well, “I'll be able to sit home and write curriculum and spend time with the kids.

68 I won't have to go to meetings because there are no committees and I won't have to do very much at
69 school. I can just independently work on stuff and I can spend more time with the kids." That was a real
70 shock when I got here and discovered that there was such an incredible amount of work to be done.

71 **[7:51]** I guess I had never thought through what it takes to start a university and what hasn't been done.
72 Somebody said to me before I came here, somebody who was already here, said, "When you get there
73 you'll see all these things that haven't been done. And then you start asking around, 'Well, why haven't
74 they been done and who is going to do them?' And then they look at you and you realize that if you need
75 them done you have to do them yourself!" So the workload was so stunning that I think I actually ended up
76 seeing the kids less here than I did in New York when I was commuting 100 miles away and not home for
77 two or three days a week. So that was kind of a shock to me.

78 In fact, when I first started working the joke in my house was, "Mommy can't tell time!" I would
79 say I'll be home for dinner at six and then I would show up at eight. And the kids would say "Haha!
80 Mommy thinks it's six o'clock and it's really eight o'clock. She can't tell time!" You know, I was never
81 around. Fortunately, my husband was very patient and not cranky about it and I was able to do most of the
82 stuff I had to do. But that was the biggest shock to me, was how much there was to be [done]. I guess I
83 thought there was somebody else, there was some sort of infrastructure and somebody was taking care of
84 the stuff like figuring out the equipment and configuring the classrooms and doing the catalog and all that
85 stuff that we ended up doing. But *we* were the work horses. It looked like there wasn't anybody else doing
86 anything except for the faculty. So that was a shock to me.

87 **[9:45]** Sleeter: Well, okay, let's move into your first job, what you did during the first year and what your
88 first job assignments. Where you were within the evolving organization. What your work was.

89 Moroh: Well, I was a faculty member. We all wore a couple of different hats. One was we were a
90 team working on the general curriculum and the catalog and all those things we had to do. Then the other
91 piece was you had your own major that you were working on, your own stuff. Ironically, I am a computer

92 scientist and that's what I had been doing and that's what I assumed I was hired to do. When I arrived they
93 showed us that there were ten majors or whatever it was and there was no computer science major. It was
94 supposed to be a technology-rich environment but there was no study of computer science. So there was
95 another faculty member, Bob Van Spyk, and he and I sat down to write I guess it was the CPEC [California
96 Postsecondary Education Commission] document or whatever it was, to insert a major which we created
97 out of whole cloth. We just made something up. It was called Telecommunications, Multimedia and
98 Applied Computing, and got it inserted into the pile of majors. I remember going to my dean and saying
99 "You hired me. I'm a computer scientist. What am I supposed to teach?" And he said, "Well gee, I don't
100 know. That's a good question!" So it was one of those things, again, where if you wanted to figure out what
101 you were supposed to do you had to do it yourself. So there was that piece.

102 **[11:15]** And then the third piece –

103 Sleeter: Okay, so you had a dean. So you were configured somewhere.

104 Moroh: Right. Well, there were these, I think we called them clusters at that point. I think that was
105 what they were called. They were like little circles of both academic and infrastructure. We had this
106 College called Science, Technology and Information Resources. So it was the sciences and technology but
107 it was also the computers and the networks and the telephones and the library. Later, when I became the
108 dean, I used to joke, "I'm the Dean of Telephones!" because that was in there as well as everything else. So
109 yes, there were maybe four or five of us in this group called Science, Technology and Information
110 Resources. Within that we developed the major and then worked with the rest of the faculty. I remember
111 we used to sit I think in mornings, we all met together and talked about

112 Sleeter: Why don't you talk about that because I may remember but listeners won't remember.

113 Moroh: Yes, so we had meetings in which we talked about the part of the curriculum that spanned
114 all of the majors. So it was the General Education, what a degree would look like, and how we were going
115 to structure things. Our Provost at the time, Steve Arvizu, spent a lot of time just talking to us about things.

116 But when we could eke some time out for ourselves we sat down and tried to do these plans. One of the
117 things that sticks in my mind was that we had a big calendar and had these big boxes and every day we
118 would cross off another day and everybody would go, “Oh, God. Oh, shit!”

119 Sleeter: Why?

120 **[13:14]** Moroh: As we were getting closer to the start of school because we started in early January and
121 school was starting August 20-something or other and we knew we only had that amount of time. I mean
122 the pressure was really enormous to try to get things done. I remember, for example, very early on
123 somebody from the administration came in and said “The catalog copy is due in two weeks.” And we said,
124 “We don't have anything to put in the catalog. We don't know yet what the majors are, we're not quite sure.
125 We don't have course descriptions. We don't have faculty. We don't have any policies, any procedures, any
126 regulations, any requirements, anything!” And they said, “Well, the catalog has to go to press in two
127 weeks!” [Chuckles]. So I think they ultimately stole the catalog from San Jose State and did a sort of global
128 search and replace and published something but it's pretty funny to look at. So there were all these things
129 that happened.

130 Then the other piece I remember, maybe this is an unfair characterization, but I remember the
131 women of the academy. I remember that we were slightly more women than men and there was no food on
132 campus. There was this truck that would come around and everyone would run out and buy hot dogs and
133 yogurt and whatever they were selling. But the men would go out to lunch and they would go downtown
134 and they would have these three martini lunches, several of them, and they would come back at three in the
135 afternoon. And meanwhile we, mostly the women, would go and eat our yogurts and come back and slog
136 away at all this work. And there was some inequity about that! So anyway, we worked a lot on that.

137 **[15:07]** Then we had a little bit of time in the afternoons usually to work on our own majors and our own
138 curriculum. But the other piece that I spent a lot of time doing along with Bill Head, another founding
139 faculty member, was going out and building bridges in the community. We would go around to the science

140 institutions in the other universities and meet people and do that kind of stuff. That had to be done in the
141 daytime as well because it was a daytime activity.

142 Sleeter: Tell me a little bit more about that piece of the work. Where you went. How you decided to
143 do it in the first place.

144 Moroh: Well, it felt like in order to establish ourselves as part of this community we really needed
145 to build some legitimacy and have ourselves recognized. So, we went to, say, UC Santa Cruz and talked to
146 those folks. In fact, that was kind of interesting because we picked their brains about how to start a new
147 university and what mistakes not to make. That was interesting. But also to have colleagues, to make those.
148 We went to the community colleges and introduced ourselves and told them what we were about. We went
149 to the Naval Post Graduate School. We went to the Moss Landing Marine Lab. We went to Hopkins
150 Marine Lab. So a lot of it was the science community but also the technology community. I think there
151 were businesses. We went to AT&T Language Lines. We went to McGraw Hill. All the places where we
152 could have partnerships. As I recall, part of what the original faculty responsibility was to be
153 entrepreneurial. In fact, there was a sort of rumor, or maybe it was told to us although it was later changed,
154 that each faculty member would raise ten percent of their salary or 20% of their salary by bringing in
155 outside funds or something like that. So we figured that the only way to do that was to kind of start making
156 connections and seeing what's available and build partnerships. So we did a lot of that. And then, was the
157 reading of the resumes.

158 **[17:25]** Sleeter: Tell us a little. The reading of the resumes.

159 Moroh: So we had to hire faculty. There were only I think 12 of us in the beginning, maybe 13.
160 And so we had to hire additional people. We hired a few people over the summer. I remember we hired
161 George Baldwin. We hired Ruben Mendoza, a couple of people in the summer. But there was supposed to
162 be an influx of faculty in July in order to teach these majors we were developing. I seem to remember the
163 figure 2,000 resumes for the positions that someone had put out there. We had not written those job

164 descriptions but someone had. I think the original job descriptions were written by some CFA [California
165 Faculty Association] union members from other campuses, or something like that. But we established that
166 we were going to be the hiring committees for those. I think there was a bit of tension in the beginning
167 where the state-wide senate or the CFA or somebody said they wanted to keep being involved in hiring the
168 CSUMB faculty members. We were a cohesive enough group that we could stand up together and say,
169 “No, we are now a university.” And that was kind of the first time we felt like we really were a university
170 and not just hired guns here. “We are a university. We are our own faculty. And we are going to hire own
171 faculty. We have that prerogative.” But what it involved was sitting up late at night reading resumes. As I
172 said, the figure 2,000 sticks in my mind. We hired 30 people or something like that that first round. There
173 were a lot of them. So all of us were on multitudinous search committees. All of us had tons of resumes to
174 read. And because one of our tenets, our core values, was interdisciplinarity, a lot of these people crossed
175 many multiple disciplines. So they didn’t apply, I think, for a specific job. I think the original letters, our
176 [appointment] letters I know said “interdisciplinary faculty” and it was in no particular place [department].
177 I think all of these were, too. So we would find ourselves reading, “Well, this guy is a historian but also a
178 mathematician so do you want him or do we want him?” As a result, we hired at least one person who
179 crossed multiple disciplines and served multiple masters, which actually didn’t work out so well.

180 **[20:00]** And so we had that evening activity, too. I remember that they told us we couldn’t take any of the
181 resumes out. That’s the point where I put my foot down and I said I have two small children at home whom
182 I never see and I’m going to read my resumes at home. So they used to give me these resumes in
183 clandestine, suitcases and paper bags and stuff so I could sneak them out at night so I could go home and
184 read the kids bedtime stories while I was reading resumes. Then I’d have to sneak them back in the
185 morning. I recall seven days a week work. I recall 12 hours, 14 hours a day work. And I recall rain.
186 Because that was also that year of the floods and rain when the Monterey Peninsula became an island
187 because the Carmel River Bridge washed out and the Pajaro River Bridge washed out and for about a

188 month we couldn't get on or off the Peninsula. So it was like a deluge in more ways than one, shall we say!

189 [Chuckles]

190 Sleeter: We've kind of wandered all over here but just finishing up number two, how did you go
191 from your initial job responsibilities to becoming Dean of Science and Technology?

192 **[21:28]** Moroh: I'll say it as diplomatically as I can. Things were not working out with our dean. We just
193 felt like we didn't have any leadership or guidance. I think there were only four or five of us at that point in
194 the sciences and we all got together and went to Vice President at the time, Bert Rivas ,and said "This isn't
195 working for us." They had seen the same thing but then they came back and said, "Well, you need a dean."
196 And we said, "No, we don't. We like this flat organizational structure, we don't need a dean." And they
197 said, "Well, there has to be somebody listed in the phone directory to answer the phone when someone
198 wants a dean. There has to be someone to sign the papers." So we all looked at each other and I guess you
199 could say I got the short straw. So I said, "Well, I'll do it for a few months," because I had no interest in
200 being a dean. In fact, my picture of a dean from my last job in New York was a guy who spent most of his
201 time making my life miserable as a faculty member. I couldn't see any positive contributions that a dean
202 made. So I said I didn't really want to do it. But there really wasn't anybody else to do it and they all said I
203 had better diplomacy skills than the rest of them so they kind of railroaded me into it. So I was actually the
204 Interim Dean for seven years because whenever they said they would do a search I would say, "Great, I'm
205 not going to apply," and then they just didn't do the search. At the end of seven years, the Provost at the
206 time said, "Well, we have to do a search or you'll become a common law dean because that's seven years."
207 And I really wasn't going to apply then either. I said let somebody else do this now, but a lot of the faculty,
208 I guess, didn't like who else was in the pool and they were very nervous about it and I guess they were used
209 to me, so they asked me to apply. And the rest is history. So now it's been just about twenty years.

210 Sleeter: As a dean.

211 Moroh: Yeah. It's coming to an end.

212 Sleeter: Let's talk a little bit about the Vision. The Vision was one of the things you came here for.
213 In what ways did the Vision shape your work?

214 [23:58] Moroh: Well, interestingly enough, I think a lot of my work was shaped by my colleagues and it
215 was their interpretation and understanding of the Vision. I mean the Vision brought me here. I loved the
216 part about diversity and multiculturalism, interdisciplinarity. I came for that piece of it, the globalism, the
217 learning community. And all that kind of stuff. But I think that there were pieces of the Vision that didn't
218 jump out to me, but when I met my colleagues, my other faculty, I really began to learn from them. The
219 two people that come to mind, one is Josina [Makau] and the other one is Christie [Sleeter]. I was a
220 computer science and math professor and we didn't spend a whole lot of time thinking about our core
221 values and our place in the world, as you could say. That's not what you did at City University of New
222 York. I think it was the association with my colleagues that really opened my eyes to what an education
223 could be for students and what it *should* be. I had this vision that we were going to kind of remake
224 education, but thinking about it I don't think I had any clue about what that meant until I came and started
225 working with my colleagues. I remember coming in and Josina saying, "What should students know and be
226 able to do to have a meaningful and successful life in the 21st century?" And I said, "Wow, that is so cool
227 really, to start to build a university around that!" The whole piece about a learning centered university as
228 opposed to a learner centered university. And issues of equity. All these things I had never really thought
229 about.

230 Sleeter: But it sounds like you had thought about it, at least in relationship to your kids'
231 experiences.

232 [26:17] Moroh: Well, yeah, I had, I had. This is a very small example but when we were in the university
233 in New York the students all called you Professor So-and-so. Nobody would call you by your first name.
234 So I always called my students Mr. or Ms. or something like that because I just didn't like that whole
235 power dynamic where they called me professor and I called them Charley or something. In fact, I actually

236 had a colleague who used to refer to the students as “the children.” So coming here where everybody could
237 email the President and we talked to each other on a first name basis and the students referred to us on a
238 first name basis I mean the first time a student walked into my office and said, “Hi, Marsha,” it was
239 kind of a revelation. But I really got to like that because it made us feel like we were all on the same team.
240 So they were just small things, but they really set a tone. So it was different. It’s the same thing about
241 outcomes based education. I was thinking about it the other day when we were talking about assessment.
242 When I was in New York I used to say to the students on the first day of class, “Here’s my contract with
243 you. These are the things I think that you’ll know and be able to do when you finish this class. I’m going to
244 write them down on the first day and on the last day of class I’m going to write them back down again and
245 we’re going to see if I really did it, because that’s my final exam. Your final exam, I test you on
246 knowledge. My final exam, is did you really learn these things.” I never associated that with outcomes
247 based education. But in some sense it really was. I didn’t know that there was such a thing as outcomes
248 based education. I learned that from my colleagues in education and from my colleagues who really
249 understood these things. So I think that for me the whole concept of what a university could be was
250 operationalized by sitting at that table with my colleagues. I think I learned much more than I contributed.
251 That’s just my take on it. That it really helped me. And the piece about Service Learning. When I
252 discovered that everyone was going to do Service Learning I said what is Service Learning? I had no clue
253 what Service Learning was. I had never heard of it. I mean I knew what service was and I did plenty of
254 service but the whole concept of service learning was so incredible. So I signed up to teach the first Service
255 Learning class the first semester I was here, and it was just mind blowing. The whole concept of studying a
256 community and understanding it and then applying your discipline in that community. Similarly,
257 Scholarship of Application for faculty, which I think is on a parallel with Service Learning for students.
258 Maybe it was something I was practicing before, but to actually consciously say we are going to factor that
259 into faculty’s retention, tenure or promotion and into students’ majors was just incredible to me.

260 Sleeter: That's really interesting because I thought when you were going out and making all the
261 community contacts that you were laying the groundwork. Well, you were laying the groundwork for
262 Service Learning.

263 [29:42] Moroh: Well, I guess I was, but I didn't think about it. I didn't think about it that way. I didn't
264 think about it for faculty either. I didn't realize that. It wasn't until there was a group of faculty that worked
265 on the RTP policy. . .

266 Sleeter: What's the RTP policy?

267 Moroh: . . . retention, tenure and promotion for faculty and the criteria. I came from an institution
268 where the only thing that counted for faculty was how much you published and where. I once asked the
269 president, "Doesn't it matter if a faculty member is a good teacher or not in this institution?" He said to
270 me, "Well, we don't have to worry about that because all our faculty are excellent teachers." You know, it
271 was one of those things. I wanted to smack him because it just gave lip service to the whole idea of
272 whether you are a good teacher or not, and it wasn't true. And nobody cared, it seemed to me, except
273 individual faculty. It didn't matter whether you were any good or not. So the whole idea of actually
274 evaluating faculty, and treating teaching as scholarship where you are purposeful about how you teach and
275 you are analytical about how you teach and you strive for continuous improvement was such an incredible
276 revelation to me. Then the other piece about Scholarship of Application, about actually applying what you
277 do in your discipline to the community in a purposeful way was just stunning to me. So, broadening the
278 definition of what a faculty member does and actually counting it. I guess I didn't realize how really
279 revolutionary that was. I mean I knew it was very different from CUNY but when I started to talk even to
280 other people in the CSU, I realized we're still sort of revolutionary in that we give faculty credit towards
281 tenure for improving their teaching and credit towards making community connections and using our
282 disciplines to better the community. I mean, wow! So. . . I lost my train of thought. I don't know where we
283 were.

284 [32:07] Sleeter: We were talking about the general question.

285 Moroh: Oh, about the Vision.

286 Sleeter: About how the Vision structured your work.

287 Moroh: I don't know that those particular things like Service Learning and Scholarship of
288 Application were in the Vision. I mean I think they were in the Vision in some way.

289 Sleeter: The term Service Learning isn't but the concept is.

290 Moroh: Right, right. So those concepts, I guess I didn't see until I got here how those things were
291 going to be operationalized. When I saw it, it was just amazing. And it's funny. In the first couple of years
292 I went back to New York whenever I could because when you're a New Yorker it's like a magnet that
293 sucks you back. I would go back and I would talk to my colleagues at CUNY and I would tell them about
294 Service Learning and I would tell them about Outcomes Based Education and the Scholarship of Teaching
295 and they said, "Man, you've been in California too long!" They didn't even understand what I was talking
296 about. Then I realized that I had crossed over into this other world of CSUMB where I saw things in a
297 much more purposeful way. And they just weren't seeing it that way. It was very interesting.

298 Sleeter: That is so interesting.

299 Moroh: Yeah.

300 Sleeter: Let's move to the next area. It has to do with the campus culture and work and creativity
301 during the early years. You've talked some about the first year. Are there additional things just about the
302 first year before the students came, about the work itself, the culture of the campus itself that you haven't
303 already talked about that stands out?

304 [33:48] Moroh: Some of the things were the connections to the other units in the university that were kind
305 of amusing. So, for example, in the beginning, we understood that we were an open university and we
306 couldn't select our students. Once we understood that we said, well, let's write a letter to all the students
307 and explain to them that this is a new university and that they have to have a certain what we call tolerance

308 for ambiguity and ability to work around construction and all sorts of things like that so that the students
309 would sort of be a self-selecting sample. I know that Josina and I worked very hard on that letter and maybe
310 some other people. We took it over to admissions and we said, "Please send this to all the applicants" and
311 then they will self-select and we'll get a group of pioneers. We only later discovered that they never sent it!
312 I remember when the students did come, going on the Outward Bound field trip with the first group of
313 students and saying to one of the guys next to me, "Well I guess you chose this place because it's a brand
314 new university." And he said, "It's a brand new university? I had no idea. I came here for the surfing."
315 And I said, "Oh, God!" Then we began to realize that it was just a random group of students and that they
316 didn't know what they were getting themselves in for. It was that sort of disconnect. Then the other piece,
317 the greatest disconnect for me was when we sat around for eight months being told that we could be
318 innovative and creative and that we weren't bound by the CSU regulations and the Title 5 regulations and
319 we could actually be free to create whatever we wanted to create. And we sat down and created these
320 wonderful learning outcomes and all sorts of stuff around what it takes for students to have successful,
321 meaningful lives. Then we discover at the end of that, oopsie, or as Josina would say, oopserooni, we were
322 in fact bound by all the regulations. So for example, our first group of students couldn't graduate because
323 they didn't have the U.S. Constitution and History requirement because we hadn't put that in. It turns out
324 that they had to go to some community college to pick up that degree requirement.

325 **[36:12]** So that's one of the things that characterized for me, was the disconnect between this lofty rhetoric
326 that we were all sucked in by, myself included, and then the realities that nobody bothered to tell us about,
327 about the way things had to be. To me that was almost like a little betrayal. Because if someone had said in
328 the first place I mean you want to know the framework that you are operating in. I work better that
329 way, and when somebody says, "Think big, do whatever you want!" then you take that seriously. Then you
330 find out that oops, you put your stuff in a framework that isn't valid and you have to start over. That's
331 crazy. So I think that's one of the things that characterized it for me, is suddenly discovering that we'd been

332 sort of misled about a number of things, that we weren't all on the same page, and that there were certain
333 disconnects there. That was not so good.

334 Sleeter: After the students got here, how would you characterize the work environment, just for the
335 first couple of years?

336 **[37:24]** Moroh: Well, one of the things that the arrival of the students let us know is how much we still had
337 left to do. I remember that first year we were so happy that we had a course schedule and some classes and
338 something for the students to go. We just thought we had accomplished everything. Ha [relieved sigh].
339 We took a deep breath and then the students started asking what are the graduation requirements, right?
340 And we didn't know what the graduation requirements were. The university required us to take seniors. So
341 there were graduating seniors coming in and we didn't have the graduation requirements. So that led to the
342 Fall break, when we had to send the students home in October for a week, and everybody hunkered down
343 and started developing graduation requirements. So I think the students were where the rubber met the
344 road, where the reality came in, where we realized that we weren't quite as far along as we thought we
345 were because they were like beta testing this operation and showing all the flaws in it. And [we] had to fix
346 it.

347 Sleeter: How did the students' arrival, then, and what you are describing affect your work in
348 particular? Both your university work, the larger picture of your work and your life here?

349 Moroh: I think one of the most interesting things was that we decided that everyone was going to
350 teach what at that point we called Freshman Pro Seminar. I had never taught anything besides computer
351 science and mathematics.

352 Sleeter: Tell us a little bit about Freshman Pro Seminar.

353 Moroh: Freshman Pro Seminar has been evolving for 20 years, but in the beginning it was sort of
354 the overview of the campus. It was a class that every freshman would take. They were going to learn about
355 the Vision. They were going to learn about how to be successful students. They were going to develop a

356 plan for their four years. It was kind of a be all and catch all. It was sort of the personification of the Vision
357 to the students. We didn't quite know what it was going to be. But we all signed up to teach it. Part of it
358 was that it was a writing class. I had never taught a writing class before. I had no idea. Then each section
359 had what we called a lab associated with it. So it was a six credit class, I believe. The lab was taught by a
360 Student Services professional. So we would have things like time management and study skills and
361 managing your finances, and whatever else thrown in there as well. So, despite that I had tremendous
362 [40:01] trepidations about doing this. They said you're gonna do it, so I said okay, I'll do it. I signed up.
363 Luckily they paired me with Linda Stamps who was a Student Services person but she had been a journalist
364 for a while. So we made a deal that I would do the teaching and she would teach the writing. She would
365 grade the students. She would edit the students' papers and help them with the writing. Actually, that
366 worked out really well because she had never taught and didn't want to and I was pretty experienced at
367 standing up in front of the classroom. I still remember people [faculty] could go off on their own but we
368 had this thing called the Safety Net Syllabus. Josina ran the Freshman Pro Seminar. So we would all get
369 together and we would plan something out.

370 Sleeter: The Safety Net Syllabus.

371 Moroh: That was a syllabus that we could all use. There was one syllabus. So if you didn't want to
372 develop your own you could use this thing that she [Josina] had developed. We would all meet every week
373 and we would talk about the next week. It was kind of a learning community around freshman year
374 seminar. I remember using the Safety Net Syllabus. We would talk about it and I would say, "I don't know,
375 something tells me that maybe this isn't going to work so well in class. I just have this feeling." She
376 would say, "Trust me. I've been doing this for 22 years. It's going to be fine." So I would go into class and
377 after the first seven minutes, it just wasn't working for me. So I ended up changing it and doing something
378 else. [Laughs] Then I'd come back the next week and she would say, "Well, how did it go?" And I would
379 say, "Well, it didn't work so much for me. I had to completely change it around." And she would say,

380 “Oopseroonie.” I never figured out why that was. But anyway, I had a wonderful time the first semester
381 teaching this class. I had a wonderful class and it was really expanding for me because I had never taught
382 anything like that before. But thank goodness I had that structure from her. I remember one of the things
383 **[42:13]** we did. We did a cooperative argumentation exercise. Our students picked prison reform. So we all
384 organized a field trip. One of the students had an uncle who was a prison guard at Soledad. So we
385 organized a field trip to Soledad Prison. It was one of the more interesting field trips I've ever had.
386 [chuckles] But that's another story!

387 And then the other piece was Service Learning. I signed up to teach a Service Learning class which
388 I had never done before. I went into a school in Seaside and taught the kids using technology. Then, I also
389 developed a Tech Tools program which was a required course for all students to learn how to use
390 computers. Many of our students were first generation and had never seen computers, didn't know how to
391 use them. If the truth be known, after 20 years students still don't know how to use them. Even though
392 they are really good at using their mobile phones, they still don't know how to use computers. But that
393 requirement is gone now. We felt it was really important in the beginning. So I did all of those things,
394 none of which were things I did at home [in New York] because I taught Computer Science and none of
395 these [classes] were Computer Science. So it was like starting a new career as a “teacher of miscellaneous,”
396 or whatever that I had never done before.

397 Sleeter: Did you ever teach the things here that you had taught in New York?

398 **[43:40]** Moroh: One-half of one semester, that was it. We started in the Fall of '95. In the Fall of '96, I
399 became a dean. I tried to teach that semester some computer science and I ended up team teaching with
400 someone else. Then the funniest class was I team taught a Tech Tools class with my husband. I was always
401 late for class because I had to go to meetings and stuff like that. I was never prepared, which is very unlike
402 me because I'm usually very well prepared. Finally, after about the sixth week he said, “Could you do me a
403 favor? Could you just not come to class anymore and let me do this? Because it's not working out so well.”

404 So I thought to save the marriage I'd better drop out of my half. So I did very little teaching beyond the first
405 year. And it's kind of ironic because I actually think I am a much better teacher than anything else. I think
406 I am a better teacher than administrator. I just never got a chance to do it.

407 Sleeter: How did the influx of new faculty change the work environment for you during the first
408 couple of years?

409 [44:56] Moroh: Well, for one, it distributed it a little bit better. So it wasn't all on the shoulders of two
410 people, which was really great. People came in with ideas and they started picking up some of the
411 responsibility and of course taking things in different directions. Because everybody came in with some
412 sort of specialty and something that they wanted to do. So, I think our curriculum on campus got quirkier
413 and quirkier as each new person injected yet another idea.

414 Sleeter: Can you give an example?

415 Moroh: Well, even in my area, we had a guy who came in and he was doing computer graphics.
416 We didn't have computer graphics in the curriculum. So suddenly we had this whole curriculum with
417 computer graphics. Then a few years later he left. We couldn't find anybody else, so the graphics part kind
418 of dried up. Then somebody else came in and said, "Oh, let's do game design. That's what I do." So he
419 was a gamer. So we started a game design [piece]. Actually, that one stuck. Then, interestingly enough,
420 we had a whole strand of educational technology when we hired John Ittelson. He brought in this whole
421 thing about educational technology. Fast forward 20 years, we have a new Education dean and the Master's
422 Program is called Instructional Science and Technology. He's saying, "How come that's in the College of
423 Science and not in the College of Education?" It's just one of those anomalies where there was no one in
424 the College of Education who was doing this and there was someone in the College of Science who was. It
425 could be in either place but that's where it ended up, and that was this sort of anomalous thing. I think in
426 the Humanities you have the same thing with History. History was in Social Science. History was in the
427 Humanities. It depended on who you hired. So they hired a historian in one and then they hired a historian

428 in the other and to this day nobody quite knows where History is. So the more people that came along. . . . I
429 think if you look back at the original structure of the curriculum there were 12 or 13 faculty. There were 13
430 majors and each one was run by one of those faculty. So I don't think it's an accident that there were three
431 arts majors and one science major, because there were three artists and one scientist. That's kind of the
432 way it evolved.

433 **[47:20]** Sleeter: For a while didn't you have a dancer?

434 Moroh: Yes, we did have a dancer! And we had a mathematician who was also a singer, who taught
435 a course in Mexican melodies, but he also taught mathematics. He had the students singing mathematics!

436 Sleeter: How did you end up with the dancer?

437 Moroh: Our Provost decided to put her in there. I don't know. I don't know. But it was one of those
438 really strange things. Well, I also ended up with [the major in] Teledramatic Arts, which is clearly an arts
439 program, in the science college. How did that happen?

440 Sleeter: I don't remember that.

441 Moroh: Well, it was a personality issue. The chair didn't get along with the dean. They decided
442 that Teledramatic Arts and Technology . . . they underlined the Technology and said, "Oh, we belong in the
443 College of Technology even though we're a filmmaking and theater program." So we had them over in the
444 Science College for a while. It was crazy.

445 Sleeter: That's how you ended up with the dancer, I think?

446 Moroh: I don't know. No, that was before that.

447 Sleeter: Oh, okay.

448 Moroh: We had a lot of that sort of personality driven structure and that came with the new faculty.

449 Sleeter: [Chuckles] What for you have been some key changes over the last 20 years? Some times
450 that really stand out, when you were like, "Oh, things seem to be going this way," that you haven't already
451 talked about. These can be things after the first couple of years.

452 [49:38] Moroh: I am trying to think.

453 Sleeter: Or key struggles that you haven't talked about.

454 Moroh: One of them, from a dean's perspective, was always the financial one. In the beginning,
455 there was infinite money. If you wanted to do something you just did it. We knew that wasn't gonna last.
456 But what we didn't realize was that suddenly the doors would close and there would be very little money. I
457 also began to see that the faculty was having less and less input into what was going on. It's strange to me,
458 it's even strange to me now, how the faculty don't seem to mind not having any input. So, for example, in
459 the budget process there was a time early on when the faculty had a lot of input into the budget process.
460 There were budget committees and the budget was reviewed by the Senate and all that kind of stuff. It
461 hasn't happened for years.

462 Sleeter: Why?

463 [50:47] Moroh: I don't know. Maybe it's the Senate leadership, or whatever it is, but it's like nobody is
464 saying anything. A few years ago when the President created three new colleges with all the associated
465 money involved, it just happened and nobody said anything. Or the President would appoint somebody
466 without a search. You know. I've often actually even called faculty and said, "Do you see what's
467 happening? You're a faculty member. Do you guys want to do something about this?" When you become
468 an administrator, you kind of go over to the dark side and you're not supposed to do things like that. There
469 was a time when one of my previous bosses said to me, "The trouble with you, Marsha, is you are too
470 faculty oriented." I said, "Well, I didn't know you could be too faculty oriented." And she said "Oh, yeah,
471 yeah. You're an administrator now." I can't march with the faculty. I'm on the other side. I have, on
472 occasion, said to faculty, "Why are you just standing up and letting this happen?" I think that's going to
473 change. I think it's changing right now. We have a new Senate chair starting this semester who is now
474 starting to say things like "Where's the budget?" and "What's going on?" So an activist model of a
475 senator. But the campus has always had a weak faculty governance structure, I think. Or governance.

476 There's never been a contested election as far as I know for Senate chair. It's more like twisting arms about
477 who's going to do it. Nobody wants to do it.

478 Sleeter: To what extent would it be a weak faculty government and to what extent would it be a
479 large administration that presses down on faculty?

480 [52:49] Moroh: Well, I don't see it that way. But that's maybe because I'm an administrator, but I'm not
481 seeing it that way. Our current president, for example, is very, very concerned about faculty uprisings
482 because he had a vote of no confidence from the faculty when he was a provost at his previous institution.
483 He is always concerned about what faculty are doing. The pattern I see is that he'll do something and then
484 ask the deans, "Are you hearing any pushback from faculty? I would let him know if there was pushback
485 from faculty but there isn't. Sometimes I sort of surreptitiously try to get faculty to push back. But I'm not
486 seeing it. The administration just got a lot larger when three new colleges were created but I don't see a
487 large administration pushing onto the faculty. I just see the faculty . . .

488 Sleeter: Yeah, I wonder why that is.

489 Moroh: Maybe it's the workload or whatever. I mean our faculty are doing their own thing, a lot of
490 them. They just don't spend a lot of time on the Senate meetings. They're not particularly well attended.
491 So, I don't know. Maybe you need a charismatic leader to galvanize people and get it going so we'll see
492 what happens. But I've just seen less and less. . . . In the very beginning we did everything as faculty.
493 Administrators sat at the table and sometimes we asked them not to, all right? I mean sometimes the deans
494 would sit with us and we would say we don't want the deans sitting with us. We really stood out there and
495 said what we were going to say. We did everything. The other day, or a few months ago, the President said
496 something about he didn't like the RTP [Retention, Tenure, and Promotion] policy, and he wanted to
497 change it. It was all I could do to keep from saying, "Well, who do you think you are? That's a faculty
498 issue. How are you gonna change it?" But I'm a dean, you know, I can't say that. I'm just hoping if the
499 President goes to the faculty and says I'm changing the RTP policy somebody stands up and says, "No!"

500 Or, “We need to have input into this.” I don't know, but I'm just seeing a sort of relinquishment of power
501 by the faculty.

502 Sleeter: Are there any other key moments or key struggles that you've seen?

503 Moroh: There are small ones.

504 Sleeter: Any other sort of watershed or something that when you think back over the last 20 years
505 just really stands out?

506 [55:39] Moroh: Well, there were all the issues originally over Peter Smith's departure. I think people see
507 different things in that. I think Peter Smith's tenure here was very controversial.

508 Sleeter: Okay, as the founding President.

509 Moroh: Yeah, as the founding President. He was here for ten years and then he left. He was very
510 controversial in many ways. He had many good qualities and he had many not so good qualities. I think
511 that there are some people that think of him as the devil incarnate. I don't. I think that, in fact, in some
512 ways for a founding president he was a very good founding president because he left the faculty alone and
513 said, “Think creatively.” He was very supportive of that. He kind of left the ground open and was
514 encouraging and empowered faculty, I think, in a lot of ways. So, I think it was kind of a mixed bag. In
515 fact, it's been interesting about the different styles of leadership. What you needed in the beginning I think
516 was somebody who let faculty step up and take the lead and do what they were going to do and left us
517 alone. Then you ended up with somebody like Dianne Harrison who was very, very controlling and very,
518 very restrictive. She wanted things a certain way and that's the way they had to be. She was not a
519 democratic leader. I think if she had been the founding President it would be a very, very different
520 institution. It would be made in her image. Her image was sort of narrow and parochial and pedantic, and
521 we would never have the creativity we have. Now we have a president who encourages innovation and
522 he's getting innovation. Faculty are really rising to the occasion. As the example, my college just won two
523 state-wide innovation awards, \$8 million innovation awards, because we've been encouraging innovation.

524 He's funded faculty innovation projects. He talks about it a lot. It's high in his values, which I guess is a
525 good thing.

526 Sleeter: Okay. You are retiring at the end of this year. How would you describe your key
527 accomplishments? Your legacy?

528 **[58:28]** Moroh: Well, I've said this before. I think the best thing I ever did for the university was the people
529 I hired, the faculty I hired. I think the College of Science is really strong. I think the thing I'm proudest of
530 is the scholar-teacher model that we fostered, where faculty work alongside students doing research.
531 Faculty bring in grants and fund students on their research. That's a culture that I have always fostered.
532 When a faculty member writes a grant I look at the budget and I say, "Where's the money for students?" If
533 there's no money for students I send it back. They know that I'm going to do that. And so last year, my
534 college had about 200 students working on faculty research projects, publishing along with faculty and
535 getting paid for it so they didn't have to work at Wal-Mart and things like that. That's the culture of
536 student-faculty partnership that we've hired people to do. I think I am leaving that college in great shape. I
537 think so. So I think that's one of the legacies.

538 **[59:50]** Also, I've been a really strong supporter of Service Learning. I've had many jobs in the university.
539 First I was a faculty member. Then I was a Science Dean. Then I was the Interim Provost for a year and a
540 half. Then, after I became the Science Dean again, I was also the Dean of the College of Undergraduate
541 Studies and Programs for a while. I guess that's what it was called. But anyway, I was the Dean of Service
542 Learning for a while. And I really believe in Service Learning. I've served on the advisory board. I've done
543 whatever I can to help them fit into the academic model and be successful. So I think I've contributed there
544 as well.

545 I think just having consistent faith in the institution, weathering all the storms, and seeing some of
546 the changes, some for the best, some for the worst, but getting through it all. I also think it's time. I think
547 that the university is now on the cusp of changing into something yet different from that. I think it's time

548 for new leadership. The startup phase is over, and so I think this is a perfect time for me to be leaving as the
549 university transitions into the next phase. For a while my husband kept saying, “When are you doing to
550 retire? When are you going to retire?” And I kept saying, “I don't know, I don't know.” But suddenly it
551 came to me that this was the exact right time.

552 Sleeter: How did you know?

553 **[1:01:30]** Moroh: Well, first of all, I began to see, “Oh, not that again!” When issues would come up, I
554 would say, “Oh, my God, I thought we put that one to bed!” So there was this “It’s always gonna be the
555 same.” Secondly, I began to see a change in my own colleagues, and it just wasn’t as much fun anymore. I
556 spent 20 years trying to solve intractable problems, you know, where some problem would come up and I
557 would say, “That’s not solvable, it can’t be solved.” Then I would hammer away at it and hammer away at
558 it and hammer away at it and finally figure out a way to solve it. I just can’t do that anymore. Now, I'm
559 starting -- I thought I wouldn’t do this about kicking the can down the road --, now I'm starting to say, “Oh,
560 my God, that’s a hard problem to solve. You know, I think my successor is going to solve that one. I'm
561 going to put it in my little briefing book and say here are some things you should pay attention to.”
562 Because it’s too hard. You know, after a while it’s just too hard. I think it’s what probably drove *you* into
563 retirement. As you know, you just can’t fight those battles anymore. You just get too tired of it. When you
564 see things evolving in a way, you want to get up there and man the barricades and say, “No, no, no, no!”
565 Then you say, “Well, you know . . .” I just don’t have the strength to do it anymore. I have a lot of other
566 things I want to do and this just taking too much time.” [Chuckles]

567 Sleeter: One last probe here. As you look back are there things that are disappointments, or “Oh, I
568 wish this would have gone that way for me and it didn’t?”

569 **[1:03:23]** Moroh: That’s a really interesting question. Um, I can’t think of any. There were some great
570 faculty that we almost got and didn’t and I keep thinking if I had been able to do something or if I had only
571 said this or done that I could have gotten those faculty. Or times when problems got solved in a particular

572 way and they could have been done in another way. Like when we developed our organizational structure.
573 There would have been other structures that might have been better. I think about, for example, the
574 sciences. We are still an interdisciplinary science program. We now have close to a third of the students on
575 the campus but we're still just one program. I think about the Arts, where they bifurcated into three little
576 programs. Now they're trying to put them back together. If in the first place those people had said, "Let's
577 form a school of the Arts," they could have had so much more strength. But you know, things were going
578 to be what they were and more things evolved on personality than on anything else. That's not a way to
579 run an institution. I think when the faculty first sat down, the 12 of us at the table, it didn't take us long to
580 realize that there was no there there. And that there was no leadership. That we had to do it all ourselves. I
581 think we did a wonderful job. Do you remember each week we would appoint a different leader who would
582 lead us for the week? Right? So the ship kind of veered a little bit here and there, you know, zigged and
583 zagged, but we kind of had our eye on the same direction and we did it. But I think to myself, if there had
584 been a strong leader who would get up there and work with us and facilitate all that, that we would have
585 been able to do more. But as it were, we were just faculty! You know. And just trying to do what we could
586 do and still practice our disciplines and do the other things. And it was so hard.

587 Sleeter: So back to the issue of the interdisciplinary sciences. Has that been a strength? A
588 weakness? Is it sustainable?

589 **[1:05:52]** Moroh: Well, I think now, as big as we are, they are now starting to talk about breaking up. But
590 it's been so wonderful because when I go to deans' meetings and people say, "Well, how do you get your
591 chemists and your physicists to talk to each other?" I say, "Well, some of our chemists teach physics.
592 We're interdisciplinary." "Well, how do you. . . we have all these fights over equipment? The biologists
593 want to use the equipment." I said, "Well, we have one equipment budget and we have one pot and we
594 don't say these are the biologists' microscopes and these are the chemists' microscopes." They are all one
595 pile. We cross-train the lab technicians. And everyone says, "How did you do that? How did you break

596 down the silos?” And I say, “Well there’s only one to do it. You don’t have the silos to begin with.” It’s
597 just absolutely extraordinary the teamwork we have. We have a common lower division core and all the
598 faculty work together on it. The faculty teach in different majors. So if you have a Marine Biologist, they
599 teach in Biology, they teach in Marine Science, they teach in Environmental Science. So when someone
600 says, “Who is your biology faculty?” I can’t tell them because I have a bunch of people that are in and out
601 and fluid. It’s worked beautifully for us. Now we’re starting to get people who feel they’ll get more
602 resources if they break into different departments, because you need more staff, and you need more. . . but
603 then we’d have to say, “Well, whose microscope . . . ?” You know? We have to start splitting things up
604 and splitting up people. Then I say to them, “Do you want four RTP committees instead of one?” And they
605 say no. And I say, “Be careful what you wish for.”

606 Sleeter: This sounds like another part of your legacy.

607 Moroh: Yeah. Well, I've been fighting any desire to do that because I see what everyone else is
608 struggling with and I say, “Why don’t we just give ourselves a break here?” So it’s worked out well. I think
609 that those were some of the things that people could have thought through a little bit better when they were
610 organizing. As I said, so much of what we did was personality driven. So much of the curriculum. So
611 much of everything. Maybe when it comes down to it, all universities are personality driven. Then it
612 becomes really important to get the right people there. We’ve had a lot of great people. And we’ve had
613 some bad hires. If you get the right people in a room. . . . I think that’s what we’ve proven, that the 12
614 people were able to create a university and get it off the ground. You had to have the right people.

615 Sleeter: Thank you, Marsha. Is there anything else you would like to say that you haven’t?

616 Moroh: No, but it’s been interesting reflecting on this long ride we’ve all had. Right?

617 Sleeter: Yes!

618 (END OF RECORDING)

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