TRANSCRIPTION RE:

CSUMB Founding Faculty
Oral History Project 1995-98
Rina Benmayor, Project Director

Interview with Steve Moore
Professor of Marine Science
College of Science

Interviewer, Christine Sleeter
Professor Emerita
Teacher Education
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Narrator: Steve Moore
Interviewer: Christine Sleeter

Sleeter: Okay, so this is Christine Sleeter interviewing Steve Moore in my home on September 15, 2015. Steve, could you state your name?

Moore: My name is Steven W. Moore.

Sleeter: And do we have permission to record you?

Moore: Yes, you do.

Sleeter: Okay, that's good. Could you tell me about your initial coming to CSUMB? How you found out about it? How you thought about it? What motivated you to move where you came from.

Moore: Sure. Sure. At the time I was doing a post doc at Berkeley so I was definitely in the 'looking for a faculty position' mode and was paying close attention to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Science Magazine*, all the job listings. I had grown up not too far from here, in Los Gatos in the south San Jose area. It's about an hour from CSUMB. So when I saw this ad for a new campus that was going to be opening on the old Fort Ord, I knew where Fort Ord was, I was really excited about that. It was particularly exciting to have a place that was opening up and offering 25 faculty positions all at once, because at the time I was engaged to Suzy Worcester who is also on the faculty now. We were looking for someplace where we could both potentially get a job. In academia it's so hard to find a place with two job openings in a similar department at the same time. So we thought, our chances aren't going to get a whole lot better than this. A new campus in a nice place with some really cool ideas about interdisciplinary education and so on. So we just kind of went for it. I put everything into the application process. We had friends at Berkeley that drilled us. We did mock interviews and all this kind of stuff to get ready for it.

Obviously that paid off. So that was, you know, that was the initial excitement. It was about the location and the innovative sort of interdisciplinary program.

Sleeter: Can I ask you to elaborate more on what it was about the interdisciplinary program or how you thought about that?

Moore: Well, you probably remember the ad. It wasn't a super long ad. At least the one I saw was not a whole lot of detail about the campus. Just a new campus, 25 interdisciplinary faculty was what they were looking for. My own background was a combination of Zoology as an undergrad and Engineering as a graduate. And so I thought I can do interdisciplinary. I know how to do that. [Laughs] And Suzy likewise had had a background in sort of Biomechanics, Engineering and Biology stuff. So from that short little ad, **[2:54]** that was the thing that caught my attention. Obviously, when I got here and learned more about the place and started researching it more, the whole Vision was also just fabulous. There were so many things in there that appealed to me. So yeah, in a nutshell that was it. In terms of what it was about the Vision that called to me, serving the underrepresented groups was something that really appealed to me. It was something that I felt was very important. It's something I also wasn't certain I knew how to do really well but I was eager to learn. The interdisciplinary piece was still in there. The environmental piece was something that called to me. The whole innovation, the whole idea that we were going to be really rewriting the book on higher education was exceedingly exciting to me. That was just inspiring. I mean who can turn that down?! [Laughs]

Sleeter: The fact that it was a new place, how did you think about that? As opposed to going to someplace where there were at least things in place? [Chuckles]

Moore: Yeah, well I don't think at the time I knew exactly what that meant. It sounded very exciting to me. I did not – probably should have – but I did not fear it at the time. [Laughs] In retrospect, you know, I didn't know what I was getting into. I had come from this graduate program that was brand new the year I started it. My background, I had done my undergrad degree in Zoology and went out looking

for a job with a Zoology degree. I thought I'd be doing that type work or something interesting. I couldn't find a lot of really interesting career kind of jobs with just a bachelor's degree in Zoology. So then I shifted around for a year figuring out what to do with my life and my dad suggested that in addition to my science interest I had always been interested in gadgets, taking apart my mom's toaster and vacuum cleaners or whatever. He said, "Why don't you try mixing the two by going to a Bioengineering program? Biomedical." The Jarvik Heart had just come out, this new artificial organ thing. So he suggested it. I tried looking into some of these biomedical engineering things. I called around and most of them said, "Go away, you don't have an engineering degree." But there was this one that had not yet started yet at Berkeley and UC San Francisco. It was College of Engineering at Berkeley and the Medical School at San Francisco that were going to create this joint program in Biomedical Engineering. I called them up and they were one of the few programs that would take somebody with a Life Science background. They were going to take half the students in with Life Science and half with Engineering. Each cohort was going to have to cross over and take the intro courses for the undergraduate degree on the other side before starting the dissertation work. So that sounded kind of interesting so I applied for that and got into that. But that also was a brand new startup program. I was in the first year. It was this intercampus thing. It was total chaos. Nobody could figure out a schedule for how to get back and forth between the two campuses. There wasn't a place for the students to meet, really. So there was a lot of the kind of build the "bicycle as you are riding it" feeling in that program as well.

[6:19] Sleeter: Ah. So you did come in with…

Moore: So I had some idea of what was involved. It was kind of fun, it was kind of exciting. I thrive a little bit on chaos, I guess. So that aspect of it I saw as potentially working in my favor. You know, I'd had experience with a startup program in a sense. I thought that might improve my odds of getting this job and I think it did. I think it played into that, that came out in the interview. And Bill Head seemed to think that was a useful bit of experience to have had. You know.

Sleeter: As you think kind of from hindsight now, 20 years you've been here?

Moore: Yes.

Sleeter: I'm going to ask you more details about the early years but just sort of looking at your decision to come here from hindsight, was it worth it?

Moore: I think so.

Sleeter: Do you ever second-guess yourself?

Moore: Yeah. I'm constantly reevaluating whether this was the right decision or not. [Chuckles] But whenever I sit down and really think it through it keeps coming up "Yes, that this was the right decision." I think that's why I'm still here. If it weren't I'd go somewhere else.

Sleeter: Well, as you reevaluate, what are the things where you think, "well maybe. . .?"

Moore: Well, I think some of the really big issues were: When we got here, as you know, there was this incredible sense of hope and optimism. We would be given carte blanche to reinvent education. That was exciting. That was super exciting. Over the years, maybe over the months but certainly over the years, it gradually became clear that we were far more constrained than we were led to believe. For example, we were a cog in the giant CSU system. While we might want to do things our own way it didn't really work very well because, for example, we had to articulate with the community colleges. While we could invent all these fabulous interdisciplinary cool classes that really made sense for the 21st century, none of them would transfer to or from the colleges that were part of a system, you know, part of a whole thing. So we couldn't get the students and when the students got here they were upset because none of their credits transferred. So it gradually started to kind of fall apart, this vision that we could totally transform education. We were still encouraged to be innovative and allowed to be innovative, but it was now within a much smaller box. Not only outside the box but inside a box and inside a fairly small box in the sense that the CSU system is a big thing with a lot of inertia and to try to change all of it from one little startup campus isn't something that's easy to do. So that was a little, you know, disillusioning. The workload has

[9:15] been phenomenal and I expected it to be phenomenal the first couple of years. I knew starting something from the ground up was not going to be easy. But I did expect it to kind of settle down after two or three or four years. And here it is 20, and I'm still hoping that it will settle down. [Laughs] It has gotten better. It has gotten much better, I will say that. But most evenings and most weekends I'm still doing work. That's okay. I found a way to keep it sustainable but there's definitely good and bad. Looking back, I still enjoy the people I work with. I still enjoy the general innovative sense of the place. I love working with the students. So it's good, it's all good but it's not quite what I thought it was going to be.

Sleeter: Yeah. Okay, well let's move to when you got here. Tell me when you got here -- I know because I was there. but people listening to this might not – what your initial job assignment was. What College or Center or whatever it was were you in? Do you remember?

Moore: Right. Nobody knew what it was going to be like. So yeah, I put in my application and I eventually got a call from some guy named Bill Head. And you're laughing because you know Bill Head. Bill Head had been hired to basically create a science program, broadly defined. Whatever that was. It was up to him to come up with that and figure out what that was going to be. He had basically received all the applicants from this massive pile of 25 or whatever faculty that sounded anything science-like. So he had all these big stacks of people. And somewhere in there I was in one of these stacks. I think he really like the interdisciplinary biology-engineering piece because that was one of the main things we were supposed to be up for. He called me up and he started talking to me about wanting to start up some environmental engineering program kind of thing, because there was a local mandate to do something within environmental sciences and he knew I was in engineering. Yeah, so Bill said he was trying to create some environmental engineering program. And this is all before the interview, there was this phone call. I said, "Oh, that's cool, Bill. I'll get back to you." I quickly ran around the UC Berkeley campus where I was at the time trying to figure out what is Environmental Engineering. So I finally found a guy actually in the

Mechanical Engineering Department that was a specialist in environmental engineering. I said, "What are you? What do you do?" He said, "I design sewage treatment plants." [Laughs] So I called Bill back up. **[11:58]** I said, "You know, Bill, I really appreciate this opportunity and all but I'm not sure that I'm really qualified for this. I have essentially no experience in designing sewage treatment plants." He said, "Wait, wait. What do you mean? What do you mean sewage treatment plants?" [I said,] "I'm not doing sewage treatment plants. I was just trying to say something that sounded like what you would be interested in." [Laughs] So then we got into a more serious conversation about what he was trying to create and what my background was. It was clear at this point from Bill's perspective it was very wide open. That we had a mandate from the community to do something that would be interdisciplinary. Something that would integrate social needs and the environmental needs of the area. But beyond that he didn't know exactly what it should be. Another one of the people that he was interviewing at the time was Susan Alexander. She was working at NASA's Ames Research Center at the time. NASA had a big push at that point. They had invested a tremendous amount of time and energy and money in a network of satellites that were orbiting the Earth and collecting all sorts of data on sea surface temperature and vegetation types and all this kind of thing. They were putting together really this big initiative to use the NASA resources to understand Planet Earth and to think of it as a whole system, not just individual pieces, but to use these satellites that integrate information over the entire globe. And they were calling that Earth Systems Science. And Bill said, "Hey, you know, that could work for us. This is a cutting edge thing, NASA is leading the way." The expectation at that time was that Earth Systems Science would be a household word in the next year or two. It didn't quite work that way. But anyway, we thought this would make a good name for a program and really a good focus for the program, to really think about looking at the Earth as an entire sphere of multiple interacting things. You've got the biology, you've got the geology. You've got the people, called the anthrosphere interacting with all these other things. So he then started thinking about structuring a curriculum around that and hiring faculty around that idea. Getting people that could really come in and

work with the whole Planet Earth as a big system and using the Monterey area as a sort of local model, where we could see things going on here that would then extrapolate to the whole planet. That works very well because we have urban centers here, we have agricultural areas, we have rural areas, we have the ocean, we have mountains. We've got all these little things so it's like a microcosm of the world in many **[14:36]** ways. And so that became the kind of theme that we were going on. We really wanted to get the human element in there very explicitly. So we not only called it Earth Systems Science but Earth Systems Science and Policy to figure out how we could use the science to shape and inform environmental policy. That's where the old ESSP thing came from. I think we called them an Institute in that day because that's sort of what departments were being [called] but we didn't want to be a department because that was too traditional and we were being innovative. [Laughs]

Sleeter: So now you were here by the time that -

Moore: No. A lot of this was happening over phone calls before. This is typical Bill Head style, right? Bill doesn't waste a lot of time. So he was basically interviewing us and starting to build the program and having us do work before we had been hired.

Sleeter: But he hired you.

Moore: Right.

Sleeter: And Susan [Alexander] was a year or so after. And Suzy [Worcester] was a year or so after.

Moore: Actually Susan Alexander and I were hired at the same time but she had some work she had to finish at NASA so she didn't show up for another semester.

Sleeter: Oh.

Moore: So we were in the same round of hires.

Sleeter: Oh, I didn't realize that.

Moore: Yeah. So in typical Bill Head style -- as you know he is very strategic, he's a great chess player. He managed to turn his one allocated faculty slot into like five faculty slots that first year [Chuckles] basically arguing why he needs them. "I can't do this without that." So he somehow convinced the administration he needed five people. And he hired a bunch of folks. John Stamm. Susan Alexander. Another person that was going to be a GIS person that ended up going elsewhere. But he hired a few people. I was the first fulltime teaching faculty that actually showed up. Everybody else was a semester or a year behind in terms of when they actually arrived. Except for Jim Rote. Now Jim Rote is a really special person who needs mention. Jim Rote was a Marine Scientist by training but ended up working in the California Legislature for 20 years. And knew Sam Farr, our congressman, very well. In conversations with Sam Farr and presentations that Sam Farr has given I've learned that Jim Rote was really the one who had the idea of turning Fort Ord into a campus. That's where that idea came from.

Sleeter: Really!

Moore: It came from conversations, basically lunch conversations between Sam Farr and Jim Rote.

Sleeter: I didn't know that.

Moore: Yeah, it's a really interesting thing.

Sleeter: Oh, my gosh!

Moore: Jim was also extremely instrumental in this whole idea of the science policy integration. That's where he lived. He was in the legislature. He really understood the value of bringing good science to the policy makers. And he also understood the difficulties in doing that because the two groups generally speak different languages. So his dream was to have a program where students would learn to cross that bridge and be able to translate good science to policy makers so that policy makers were making informed decisions based on really solid information.

Sleeter: Hmm.

Moore: So anyway, Bill hired Jim Rote as really the first teaching faculty. Jim Rote unfortunately had multiple sclerosis at the time and didn't have a lot of energy and he was half time, essentially, those first few years.

Sleeter: I remember.

Moore: So I was hired as the first full time teaching faculty. I guess it was Bill Head here, Jim Rote, and then me. I arrived two, three months before campus opened, I think, something like that. Yeah. Then it was just the three of us, basically, for that first semester. So that was an exciting time. [Laughter]

[18:20] Sleeter: [Laughs] Well, tell me about that first semester. About the first six months or year when you got here.

Moore: Yeah. Where should I start? I should probably start with the interview. [Laughs]

Sleeter: Yeah, okay.

Moore: I wanted to make a really good impression for my interview so of course I wanted to show up on time, right? So I came down here the day before to make sure I could locate the room where the interview was going to be. I had a building number. Four thousand-something. Right. I actually got here the evening before, came onto the base, drove around for God knows how long. Never found the building. You're laughing because you know. They all looked exactly the same. Hundreds of little boarded up buildings kind of mustard browny yellow. They all had some number painted on the side. I got there just late enough it was getting kind of dim. It was not light. And there were no street lights on the base at that time. It was kind of an overcast night. I think a new moon. So by the time the sun went down it was pitch black and I was just driving around through these endless roads and buildings trying to find a place for my interview. Never did find it. Finally gave up. Went back to the hotel. Came in really early the next morning to find it and fortunately did locate it. It was in a building that we now know as the Watershed Institute. It's got a beautiful mural around the side of it. At that time it didn't. It was just another one of the boarded buildings. [Chuckles] So I met Bill for the interview. I met Jim Rote. He was there. And Jim May who was

at that time basically the Dean of the Science and Technology. Yeah, we had a great interview. It went really well. We had fun. They were a good group asking me good questions. But very supportive, very fun and a good time and ultimately I ended up being offered the job. Then I remember coming down my first day. I showed up at the Watershed Institute there. I walked in the door. And Bill bowled me over almost coming out, running with his briefcase, threw his briefcase at me and said, "Here, grab this, we're headed off to a meeting." In fact, we were going to meet you and Marsha and various other people, I think. [Laughs] He was rattling off names. You know. "Marsha Moroh. Christie Sleeter. And we're going to meet all these people. They're just awesome people." He was telling me how wonderful all these people were that I was going to be working with. And he said, "Get in the car!" He had this big, old beat up I don't know what it was. An old Lincoln Continental or something. But it was like the Dukes of Hazzard. The door didn't work. The window didn't work. You had to kind of climb over the top of it. I'm trying to get the door open. He said, "Just climb in and jump over. Get in." So we leap in the car and we go tearing off across this place full of abandoned buildings. And as you know, at that time there was the Watershed **[21:10]** Institute way out in left field. And then there was a cluster of buildings. 80, 82, 83 or 84 and 86. And that cluster was where really the heart of campus was at that time. What's currently the center of campus was nothing but an empty field and some boarded up buildings. So we drove down there and I got to meet you and a whole bunch of other people. Yeah. Marsha. Bill had given me little quick summaries of everybody before I got there so I kind of knew who I was meeting. And we just immediately dove in and started working on a bunch of stuff. I can't remember exactly what it was we were figuring out, like what classes we were going to have and what numbers that we're going to have and how we were going to schedule them. I remember somewhere in that first week, Post It notes on the wall trying to figure out a class schedule or something. [Chuckles] It was just, you know, it was chaos. But it was fun. Yeah. Steve Arvizu was there telling us basically how we had this carte blanche opportunity to reinvent higher education. It was very exciting. It was very exciting, totally crazy. And fun.

And then, yeah, the typical day was show up at who knows what hour, it all kind of blended together. Then we'd sit there and he'd be at one end of the Watershed Institute with his little radio going and his yogurt. Bill survived off of yogurt and crackers. That was like all he ate. He'd be down at one end of the hall with Bob Dylan blaring and I'd be at the other end, with me yelling back and forth, "Hey, do you have this document ready?" "No. The copier's broken." And we'd go in and it would be 3 in the morning and we'd still be there. You know? Working. Then we'd go home and get a few hours of sleep, come back in and do it all over again and just keep going. Occasionally jumping in his crazy car and racing down to the other side of campus to meet with other people.

Sleeter: [Laughs] Did you get tired in all of that?

Moore: Oh, sure. But adrenaline just kept us going. Yeah, I mean face it, the students were coming, right? The clock was ticking and this wall of students was scheduled to arrive any day now and we didn't have a program. We didn't have a curriculum. We didn't have classes. We didn't have anything figured out. [Laughs] There was nothing. So it was crazy. It was just kind of around the clock very exciting, very fun and it was one of those things where because of all the adrenaline you could kind of keep going 24/7. [Chuckles] I did at one point actually count hours and we were doing 100 to 110 hour weeks at that point. [Laughter]

Sleeter: Oh, my.

Moore: Yeah, it was kind of nuts.

[23:46] Sleeter: Okay, I'm going to want to return to the work in the early years but let's think about the Vision because you've mentioned that earlier.

Moore: Oh, yeah. Sure.

Sleeter: In what ways has the Vision informed your work?

Moore: I use it as a touchstone. I still have it in my office, 20 years later, and every now and then I check in with it. I read it through again and refresh my memory and kind of say, "Well, how well have I been doing this, that or the other thing?" It's an interesting document.

Sleeter: Well, give me an example, say the last time you looked at it, what things jump out at you? What things do you go, "Well, hmm, I could do more with that"?

Moore: Well, lets talk about the interdisciplinary thing because that it was first attracted me to it. That's in the Vision Statement. And it's been one of those things where in some ways we've done it really well and in other ways we haven't. And in some cases we've actually decided it was a bad idea. [Laughs]

Sleeter: Okay. Can you give me for instances of all of those?

Moore: Yeah. So for instance, okay, so our Earth Systems Science and Policy program, very interdisciplinary. Very innovative. Really a wonderful idea. And I think it is in many respects the kind of curriculum that the world needs right now, at least in the environmental sciences. But here again we run into this constraint of living within a particular system in a particular world. When high school students and their parents are looking for places to go to college, almost none of them are saying, "Gee, Mom or Dad, I'd like to go major in Earth Systems Science and Policy. Can we find a list of campuses that offer that?" That doesn't happen. You know, they've heard of biology, they've heard of chemistry, they're interested in science. So we learned through the difficulty of attracting students that while this was a really cool program and a really cool name nobody had heard of it, nobody understood what it was. So we have a bit of a marketing issue. And Dianne Harrison, she was I guess our third President. She came in and she said, "These names are great but nobody knows what they are. Give me some normal names." And so we tried Biology. We thought okay, we're getting big enough at this point that we probably are going to branch out and have a couple of majors so we tried offering Biology. Instantly we were overwhelmed with students.

Sleeter: Oh.

Moore: We hadn't really changed anything that we were offering in terms of classes. We just had a subset of them and decided to call the major Biology. And suddenly there were thousands of students applying for Biology. So we realized that that was a problem in itself. Just the whole interdisciplinary thing was maybe a little ahead of its time and certainly the naming.

[26:43] Now our Biology program is fairly interdisciplinary. Behind the scenes we haven't changed what we're trying to do. But the face of it this was something that was much more recognizable for the typical prospective student and parent.

Sleeter: Yeah.

Moore: So that's one example. I think the serving the underrepresented folks who haven't had the opportunity for higher education, that's something that continues to be a focus and a challenge. In sciences, I don't know how it is necessarily in the other disciplines, but certainly in the sciences, where we have this real vertical kind of structure in our curriculum where courses have prerequisites that themselves have prerequisites that have prerequisites, if students don't come in well prepared then it takes them an extra long time to get through the program. A good example is the math background. For all of our starting science classes you have to basically be in PreCalculus or so. A lot of these students have two or three or four semesters of math to go through before they can get to PreCalculus. So we have a situation where we're trying to provide the support that the students need to be really successful in these majors. It takes a lot of resources and time and energy. While it's something we feel is important it's not something that the system necessarily recognizes or at least acknowledges in terms of the funding.

Sleeter: How have you dealt with that?

Moore: Well, we as a campus I think have gradually come to recognize that there is this gap and you have two choices. You either act as a filter, in which case you're very much like the traditional university. You say "Okay, you're not ready, sorry, bye bye." Or you come up with the resources to really provide the support that students need to make up that extra distance. And you advise students and their

parents early on in the game so there's not unmet expectations, that it might take a little longer than four years to get through this program. Then of course you have to have the financial aid and things. So it's a lot of work, a lot of resources. Gradually those things are being put into place. We have programs that are very helpful now. I don't think we've solved the problem yet but we're moving in the right direction and I think we've made some significant strides.

Sleeter: Cool! Is there anything else about the Vision when you look at it as a touchstone before I move on to a different question?

Moore: There's one that's an amusing thing. Every time I read the part about innovative forms of tenure. I can't remember the exact wording: "experimenting with innovative alternatives to tenure" or something like that. I remember early on conversations about how we were basically going be given the option of signing away our right to tenure in exchange for higher salaries or something along those lines. You know, you remember these conversations. And this was going along swimmingly, everybody felt this was lovely until Betty McEady stood up one day and they had a big conversation about how tight the budget was. She says, "Well, if the budget is to tight where are you going to come up with all these extra money for these people who have given up tenure in exchange for a higher salary?" And that was the last we ever heard of being innovative about tenure! [Laughter] So every time I read that part of the Vision it kind of makes me chuckle. [Laughter]

[30:18] Sleeter: Okay, let's return to the work of the campus culture in I'd say the first year, year and a half or so you were here. You've talked about the long hours. What about the work stands out in your memory?

Moore: Constant change, I think. Again, the analogy of building the bicycle while riding it. Nothing ever sat still. Everything was a moving target. Just about the time you think you've got a class figured out, the curriculum has changed and the class is no longer relevant so you got to invent a new class. The prerequisites have to be changed. The method you used to put your course in the catalog last year is no

longer the method that's used this year. [Laughs] That continues to this day. You know, we went through different email systems and various other things. Just about the time you think you're up to speed and you've finally got the kinks worked out, you have to take a hard left turn or something. [Laughs] That was unbelievably frequent in those first years. It seemed like every minute the rules were different. It's much better now, while it still happens. We're dealing with trying to enter courses into the Course Consent calendar now and the software isn't working. [Laughs] And here we are 20 years into the thing.

Sleeter: Now your first year here you were creating the program, you were teaching classes, tell me a little bit about which classes you were teaching.

Moore: Yeah, that's actually a really good question. So here we are trying to create this interdisciplinary science program which is basically chemistry and physics and biology and geology and atmospheric science plus economics, policy, all this stuff wrapped into one. There's Bill Head, who is pretty much busy with administrative things and Jim Rote half time and me to deliver this curriculum. That's the first semester. And then the next semester a few more folks like Susan Alexander came on the line and John Stamm and so on. So we have a few more folks. But our curriculum is way bigger than our capacity to actually deliver it for those first few years. So we're kind of playing this little musical chairs game where we're running around and trying to jump from class to class to class to create a thing that – it's almost I picture a pond with a bunch of little turtles and their backs sticking up. We are the turtles and somebody is trying to walk across the pond and it's too far to cross. So as little turtles we're moving along and surfacing just ahead of where people are walking, so it's like this perpetual path. And we were doing the same thing with classes, you know. We'd teach their freshmen classes and then we'd quit teaching those and teach their sophomore classes so they could take those. And then quit teaching that and teach the junior classes, and hoping that not too many freshmen are coming in at the time. [Laughs] It worked. It worked. I wouldn't say it worked super well but it kind of worked. [Laughs] And just, yeah, filling gaps

basically on an "as needed" basis in very much a triage sort of mode. You know, what do we need most this week to prevent a really huge disaster?!

[33:50] Sleeter: And then in addition to that you were probably doing committee work.

Moore: Absolutely.

Sleeter: What were your main responsibilities there? There's program development but what else?

Moore: It was endless. I mean, well for example, there was no faculty governance structure back in those days. And so Marsha and a few others got together and started trying to invent a set of bylaws and faculty governance. There was the whole Strategic Plan for the University. There were some very rough ideas but they hadn't been really formalized. And every time they got formalized it was out of date before it got finished and so we had to do it again. So it was that kind of thing. And then of course, lots of faculty hiring to try to keep up with the growth. So there were faculty search committees. And then the RTP process, the retention, tenure and promotion process, so you were evaluating other faculty. Then we were also trying to build bridges with the community. That was another thing in the Vision Statement, was to really be an engaged campus and to reach out and connect with the community, not just this little isolated ivory tower. So there were meetings with folks at the various community colleges, at the various agencies in the area. In our case we were working with a lot of the environmental agencies like the National Marine Sanctuary or Fish and Wildlife, these kinds of places. So just endless opportunities to have committee meetings. [Laughter]

Sleeter: Did you work on faculty governance?

Moore: Yes. I was one of the …what was it, the initial seven or something? Marsha kind of took the lead on that and there were like seven of us that drafted the very first bylaws, and the very first Academic Senate document.

Sleeter: Yeah. Did you help draft the RTP policy?

Moore: A little bit. Mostly Bill Head really took the lead on that one. I was kind of off in the side wings offering some suggestions. But I was not a major player in that one.

Sleeter: Okay. [Laughter] Oh, here's a good one. Describe a moment when you wondered, 'Why am I here?' in the early years.

Moore: Okay. Yeah. I have a friend back in Berkeley that does these annual Easter party things at her house up in the Berkeley Hills. I went back to one of these and was chatting with – this friend was basically a lab tech for the lab I did my Ph.D. in. We would meet with her and a bunch of the other grad students that I had been working with. So we got together and we were all sitting around chatting. I was talking to one of the people that had basically entered the same Bioengineering program I had entered, at the same time, graduated the same time I did, so we were pretty much parallel in every way. I was asking him about his work schedule because I was still doing my 100 hour weeks and I was feeling a little exhausted. And I wasn't making quite as much as I had hoped to be making. And I asked him, "So what do you do?" He had gone off and started working for some biomedical engineering firm. He said, "Well, it's pretty cool. I work a four day week and get three-day weekends and I'm making over a quarter million dollars a year." [Laughs] And he was fresh out of [graduate school]. . . . So he's talking about all the stuff he does in his free time, and it really was free time. His three days off a week were really off. He said, "No, I go home at like five on a regular day and on those days I'm off I go backpacking or whatever." And I was thinking, "Did I do something wrong?" [Laughter] [Sigh] Oh, but anyway, I'm still here. So I keep coming back and thinking, "Well, I really love what I do. And I believe that it makes a difference somehow in at least individual student lives."

Sleeter: Yeah.

[38:04] Moore: I look back at the students that have been my Capstone students and where they are now and what they're doing and I realize I really have had an impact on peoples' lives and that keeps me going.

Sleeter: Where do your students end up going?

Moore: Oh, all sorts of amazing places. A lot of the early students went into environmental consulting firms, where they are now. They've moved up through the ranks and some of them are like directors for whole divisions of major environmental consulting firms.

Sleeter: Do you stay in touch with them?

Moore: Yeah. They generally stop by every few years. It's really fun to see them, yeah. In fact, we've got full generations now. I have students now that are children of students that I had that first year. [Laughs]

Sleeter: Oh, my gosh! [Laughs]

Moore: Yeah, so we do keep in touch with some of them.

Sleeter: Huh.

Moore: Yeah. Kind of mind blowing, isn't it?

Sleeter: It is. I'm gonna kind of return to you looking back now but as you think forward from the early years what would you say were some key moments of struggle or evolution or change that kind of stand out?

Moore: Well, for me one of the biggest ones was that really earthshaking realization, somewhere along the line -- it happened kind of gradually and kind of suddenly--, that we really don't have as much flexibility as we thought we did to reinvent the wheel. Or higher education, I should say. That was probably a sort of a slip, an intentional slip, reinventing the wheel because [Chuckles] the other thing that was a big transformation, at least for me, was recognizing partly through all the struggle that there's a lot of really brilliant people out there in academia and that we are not the first ones to ever struggle with these ideas of trying to rewrite how you do higher education. So there were two things going on. One was, you know, you walk in the door and you're told, "You guys are gonna have this chance to figure out how to do it right because the whole rest of the world is stuck in this rut and they're not doing it well." And so there's this excitement of redoing it. Then along the line you're told, "Well, we were kidding. Actually you can't do it

that differently because you have to articulate with these community colleges, you have to fit in with the CSU model," da-da-da-da-da. And then, just about the time you're totally exhausted and trying to kind of reinvent in a place where you can't reinvent, you realize that the stuff you've been trying to do has already been tried somewhere else.

[41:01] Sleeter: Can you give me an example?

Moore: Yeah. I'll go back to the classic old lecture model, right? There's a lecture model in academia which in the early days of CSUMB was the evil, nasty, terrible stay-away-from-it thing. That was the thing that happened in all the other big universities and it was horribly ineffective and students don't learn that way, etc., etc. Right? And so we were going to try a bunch of different things. The "Sage on the Stage was getting replaced by the "Guide on the Side," for example, where we had real hands-on project based learning where the faculty member was not so much telling students a bunch of information as guiding them as they discovered it for themselves through various projects or whatever. This was cool. It worked to an extent. Found out it worked a whole lot better with small classes than it does with big classes. And found out that as things get bigger and bigger and bigger there are certain models that you are sort of forced into, even though they might not be the ideal they are the only ones that are actually realistic. And under that constraint of a very large class, they may not be such a bad thing after all. And so some of these lecture ideas, while certainly there is room for improvement in the classic lecture model, it's also got some things going for it. It is actually an effective model for some students, not all students. So I guess I realized somewhere along the line we were sort of throwing the baby out with the bath water, and really we needed to step back and pay a lot more attention to the phenomenal amounts of work that other people at other universities have already done and what they've already figured out. We probably could have saved ourselves a lot of energy if we had. . .

Sleeter: Are there some that you really then started tuning in on or paying attention to what they did?

Moore: I don't know if it's a specific one as much as it is this whole shift in my mindset of you know, I could probably do a better job at teaching and save myself a lot of energy and time and effort and at the same time, if I paid more attention to the literature of what's already been done and found out what has worked for other people rather than trying to invent in a vacuum.

Sleeter: Okay, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Moore: Some of that, I mean it was such a crazy pace that none of us had time to go look at the literature. [Chuckles]

Sleeter: But then you began to.

Moore: Began to. And yeah, I realized that some of the discoveries that I had made personally through my own experience teaching of what worked and what didn't work were already out there if I had bothered to look. [Laughs]

Sleeter: Oh!

[43:56] Moore: Yeah. So, in retrospect again I was scrambling so fast just to keep my head above water and deliver something for students that I don't know that I can fault myself for not having spent hours in the library looking at this stuff. But had I done that, I probably would have progressed faster than I did and figured out how to teach courses well.

Sleeter: Well, one might say that across campus. Did the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Center help along that line?

Moore: Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, that's been a phenomenal resource. I don't know that it's always been called that. I remember Joe [Larkin] teaching outcomes-based education workshops, which I found exceedingly valuable. I really did. That, for me, as obvious as it sounds -- that you should teach to outcomes --, the actual mechanics of how you think about that and how you actualize that has proven very powerful for me. I've tried a lot of different things. I've tried all sorts of different ideas. But that is one that I have really stuck with.

Sleeter: Oh, I'll pass that on to him.

Moore: Yeah. Do. Please do. I still use it. It's the starting point for every time I plan a course or a lesson or anything. I now go to my "Okay, what do I really want them to know and why do I believe that's important?" And then, "How am I going to help them learn that and how am I going to assess them in a way that actually tests that instead of some other irrelevant thing?" And I structure my teaching around that and it's been really valuable. I think without going to those workshops that Joe was leading on that, I wouldn't have done it quite the same way. Yeah. I just went to one last semester on "The Inverted Classroom." That is one where I think the ideas are fabulous and gradually I would like to incorporate them, but that one's a little harder to do. [Chuckles] I'm finding it's something I have to do gradually. It's hard to take one course and flip it in a semester. So I think there's a lot to it, but I admit that one's [more difficult]. So, yeah, I definitely use the Teaching, Learning Assessment Center. It's been very valuable. I direct all of our new faculty to it. When we have new faculty that come in, they usually are feeling a little overwhelmed, and I say, "Hey, if you want some help being a really effective teacher go check out TLA. It's one of the perks of coming here." I tell them that. I mean that's one of the reasons you would come here rather than going to some other place, is because it's got a really good program for faculty support.

Sleeter: Yeah. Yeah. What would you say have been your main accomplishments now as you look back? Or your legacy as you look back?

[47:03] Moore: Well, clearly the science program has been very successful. I know that I was a key player in an early piece of that. Certainly most of the credit goes to Bill Head for his vision and his ability to rally the troops and get everybody really working together as a great team and all that stuff. But it is a team effort. All of us who were there in those early days really contributed. And I think I can take some credit for what exists now in terms of a thriving science program and a thriving campus. I mean as you know, in the early days the campus was much smaller and we all got to see each other and we all kind of knew what was happening on all the corners of the campus. Now it feels a little more isolated. I miss that feeling. But

yeah, our science program has at least 1500 students or something like that. It's more than twice the size of the campus the first year.

Sleeter: Yeah.

Moore: Yeah. And it's growing all the time. So it's not really possible now to wander around campus and have lunch with everybody from every department like we used to.

Sleeter: Yeah.

Moore: I do miss those days, definitely. But on the other hand the campus is doing well. We're obviously attracting a lot of students and I think the students are generally having a positive experience. The first few years, as you know, were kind of rough. The very first year I think was okay, because students that first year kind of knew what they were getting into. They knew they were coming into a brand new place that was just trying to get itself figured out. Those students, those pioneer students, they had a pioneering spirit. And I think a lot of those, at least in our science program, had already come from other schools that hadn't really worked for them. The traditional model wasn't working and they were excited about this new thing. So for that cohort of pioneering students, I think CSUMB was a really great opportunity and I think it worked well for the vast majority of them. By the second and third year that wasn't working so well because the students were coming in thinking they were going to a normal campus and it wasn't yet a normal campus. [Laughs] We still had a lot of loose ends. The infantry was still there. So you know we had a few rough years early on when the student experience wasn't necessarily a very positive one. There was a lot of confusion over the advising. They were getting mixed messages. Things weren't happening on time. Financial aid wasn't showing up on time. A lot of little problems that added up to an experience that wasn't always real positive. And that ultimately reflected back with the grapevine and CSUMB had a little trouble attracting students for a while. That's changed at this point. You know, we're definitely on the radar screen, we're a respected campus.

[50:11] Sleeter: What would you say are your main accomplishments?

Moore: Wow. My main accomplishments, personally. There are big ones and there are small ones. The big ones, I think, are ones that I can't trace to myself as much as being a member of the team, like establishing the faculty governance, building a great science program. Those are things where I feel I made a significant contribution to building a really awesome thing that's here now. I can't claim sole credit for it. For the sole credit, it's little things like my little research lab that I've got going, that I built, kind of against strange odds because of the way this campus started. On a traditional campus, you know, you come in and you're given a little extra release time to get your research up and running. On this campus of course, any extra time you spend with all those committees we talked about and the research kind of took a back seat. It wasn't till recently that I've actually been able to carve out the time to get a research program going. It's been a very fun one. It's not huge but I work with my students to build little under water robots and other things that we use to go study marine life, marine ecology. I've got maybe a half dozen students in the lab. But they're doing really fun stuff. I had four of them going off to interesting places, research cruises. One to Micronesia. I had a pair of students to Micronesia. Another pair of students up on a ten-day oceanographic cruise in the Gulf of Mexico studying deep sea coral reefs, things like that. I've got students here doing all sorts of neat stuff. These are really transformative experiences for these students. They are going on and getting great jobs building remotely operated vehicles and stuff like that. So that feels very successful to me. It's small, it's a small scale operation but the students that go through it, it's really life changing for them and that feels good.

Sleeter: Huh! Cool! This kind of concludes the questions. Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that I didn't really ask about or you didn't get a chance to [ask]? About some of your experiences.

Moore: No, it's actually a really good list of questions. I would just comment that, you asked me whether this has been a mistake to come here. One of the things that keeps me coming back to the yes answer, that this was the right thing to do, is the people I've had a chance to work with here. My colleagues, folks like

Christie Sleeter! [Laughs] No, seriously, the team that has been on this campus, for the most part, have been a really phenomenal group of people to work with. All caring about students. All fun people to work with. All creative, innovative people. That's been one of the things that I think about when I sometimes go back to that time when I heard this guy was making a quarter million bucks and working 4 days a week, I also ask people [from other campuses], "So how do you like working with your colleagues?" Usually they're not real happy about that. In other academic departments there's a lot of infighting and so on. It sounds like, from what I've been able to gather, we really have a pretty unique work environment here, certainly within the Science Department. I don't know if it extends to all of the rest of the campus. But within the Science group it's a pretty cool group of people. We have a lot of fun working together and hanging out **[54:12]** together. Maybe one other thing, that reminds me, the housing situation. As you know, the campus at one point had a 'for sale' housing program where they took some of the rental units and they fixed them and made them available for sale to staff and faculty. I was thinking about whether we should buy one of these houses. In fact, even before coming to CSUMB the residential idea, that staff and faculty and students would all live together on campus, I wasn't sure how that was going to work out. I could see real positive aspects to that. I could also imagine lines of students at the front door at 3 a.m. before the exam, knocking and saying, "Hey, what's gonna be on the exam?" [Laughs] Or "I have trouble with number 37 on my homework." You know. So I was a little nervous about living on campus at first, but it actually worked out really well. I liked living in the "company town" with other faculty. It does blur the lines between work and life, in a way that's probably not totally healthy. For example, Susan Alexander lives two doors away and we have meetings. We have work meetings on weekends, evenings, whatever, rather than being able to put the work away. It's just too easy to keep working. So that's not good. But the "for sale housing program" was one where we really had to decide, "Okay, do we really like living in this company town or not," because we were considering buying a house. We did ultimately buy a house out there. And that's been I think a neat thing. It's been great for raising our son, Kyle. We like the Fort Ord

backcountry. We like mountain biking and hiking and it's all right there. We like our colleagues and our neighbors because it's the same group of people we work with, we live near. That has worked out really well and I think that is a fairly unique thing about this campus. Not every campus has that going for it. I love being able to ride my bike or even walk to work in the morning, so that's nice. And not having to deal with the commute traffic on the highway is lovely. So, yeah. [Chuckles].

Sleeter: Oh, thank you so much.

Moore: Thank you, Christy. This has been fun. And it will be fun to hear all the other interviews with everybody and have a collective look back.

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