

TRANSCRIPTION RE:

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

**Interview with Qun Wang, Professor
Humanities and Communication
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences**

**Interviewer, Josina Makau, Professor Emerita
Humanities and Communication
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**

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Narrator: Qun Wang
Interviewer: Josina Makau

1 **Makau:** *Today is Wednesday, December 2, 2015. This is Josina Makau and I am talking with you*
2 *from my home in Monterey, California. Joining me for an interview as part of the CSUMB Founding*
3 *Faculty Oral History Project is Professor Qun Wang. Before we begin, Qun, would you please state your*
4 *full name?*

5 **Wang:** Yes, my name is Qun Wang.

6 **Makau:** *Do I have your permission to record this interview?*

7 **Wang:** Yes, you do.

8 **Makau:** *Thank you so much for participating in the Founding Faculty Oral History Project. I'm*
9 *especially grateful because before this interview began you shared with me that you, among other things,*
10 *have jet lag from a very prestigious visit to China that you just returned from and you told me the saga of*
11 *55 hours of travel. We don't have time to review that saga here but I so appreciate that even in the face of*
12 *those obstacles you've joined me today for this interview. Thank you so much.*

13 **Wang:** You're welcome.

14 **Makau:** *Would you tell us something about your history and your background?*

15 **Wang:** Yes. I came from China. I came to the United States in 1983 to study American and British
16 literature. Here is an interesting phenomenon. Because I studied literature so sometimes I tell jokes.
17 Sometimes my students would ask me, they would say, "Dr. Wang, why did you pick American Literature
18 in China?" I would joke with them. I would say that it was because it has a shorter history so there are
19 fewer books to read. [Laughs]

20 **Makau:** [Laughs]

21 **Wang:** But of course everything you do there's a price to pay as Arthur Miller would say. and
22 indeed, in China because English was a second language we could actually pick to focus on either
23 American literature or British literature. So in China I focused on American literature. But when I came to
24 the United States I decided to pursue my Ph.D. and it was in both British and American literature. So
25 surprise, surprise. I had to start from Beowulf. [Laughter] There was a lot of catch up to do. 2000 years of
26 history. And the comprehensive, the doctoral qualifying examination included two days, 8 hours a day.
27 They could pick a line from any book and would ask you, such as "the walls are burning," you are
28 supposed to identify the source of the line and briefly discuss the thematic significance of the line. So
29 **[3:06]** where is that line from and they have questions such as "carpe diem," discuss the significance of the
30 theme. And use examples from three genres to support your answer! And that was a 15-minute, fifteen, one
31 five minute question. So there was a lot. I was not the only one who was in that kind of dilemma because
32 some of the European students, the Asian students who were in the Ph.D. program at Oregon, they had
33 similar problems. They focused on American literature. They had to take a lot of British literature classes.
34 So that's where I came from. I studied English and American Literature in China. And I came to the United
35 States and I studied both British and American Literature. Well, after the Ph.D. qualifying examination you
36 **[4:06]** still have to take two field examinations, four hours per examination. And then you can write your
37 dissertation. My dissertation is actually on Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee. So that
38 got me interested in American Drama. In 1991 I was actually one of the charter members of the Arthur
39 Miller Society. When we started there were only 15 of us and today we have a membership of over 50,000
40 people all over the world and we're very proud. Our original goal was to get Arthur Miller a Nobel Prize.
41 But he passed away and the Nobel Prize never goes to someone who died. And also because of my interest
42 in that area I also published a book on August Wilson. I think that was the first book, August Wilson.
43 Although the guy was a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner that was either the first one or the second one in the
44 country on August Wilson. So that's why it's collected by Harvard, Yale, Princeton, internationally,

45 Germany, the Chinese National Library, British Library, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Israel and
46 South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and so forth.

47 **Makau:** *Wow. No wonder you are such an internationally renowned scholar in your field.*

48 **Wang:** Thank you.

49 **Makau:** *In fact, isn't it true that you actually published a text book when you were in your*
50 *twenties?*

51 **Wang:** Well, this is a sidebar. First I want to say that I am very, very grateful that Professor Josina
52 Makau got me this job because [Laughs] in my previous life I was teaching in the so-called frozen tundra.
53 That was the University of Wisconsin. I was actually a tenured Associate Professor at the University of
54 Wisconsin. It was all good. They treated me very nicely. I was promoted ahead of my time. I was there
55 only five years but I got tenure and I was promoted to Associate Professor. It was just so cold. [Laughs]
56 Also, when the CSUMB opened, when they were hiring and I heard this job opportunity I got so excited.
57 And also I promised my wife. One day our toilet clogged and it was the wind chill was 30 degrees below
58 zero and she walked to the hardware store to get some of the parts. So I promised to her, I said give me
59 five years and then I will take you back to the West Coast because we both went to the University of
60 [7:20] Oregon. So five years was fast approaching. So CSUMB opened up. And actually at the same time I
61 also interviewed with Oregon State University and the University of Washington, both of them are the Pac-
62 12 schools. But when I interviewed with the CSUMB I was very, very excited. When I interviewed with
63 other schools usually they would say that, "Oh, we will reimburse you your trip." But with CSUMB they
64 actually asked me which airlines do you prefer to use? That was a first. And when I landed at the Monterey
65 Airport, I rented a car and I drove on Highway 68. When I saw – and this was February, you know that it
66 was still freezing in Wisconsin – when I saw the green trees and then they put me in the Monterey Beach
67 Hotel, by Home Depot. Large glass window. Fires on the beach. I said, "Oh, this is paradise. This is where
68 I want to be." So I popped four sleeping pills, got my Z's, almost didn't wake up the next morning, miss

69 my interview. Jumped in the car and drove to campus. And my heart sank. [Laughs] I remember this was
70 1995, February. There was no campus. [Laughs] Boarded up buildings. It was like a ghost town. And
71 Professor Josina Makau and her team interviewed me in the...what was the – Watershed building. The
72 chairs were collapsing and they couldn't even find the chalk and the eraser. I said, "I want to put something
73 on the board." They said, "We don't have something." [Laughs] That's how we started. And so I said,
74 "Shoot, at least in Wisconsin I still have an office and a computer. Do I really want to come here? We
75 didn't have no grass, no classrooms. We taught our first classes in Stilwell Elementary School. The chairs
76 barely fit. But I had to walk there because we had one car. I left the car with my wife. But that's how we
77 **[9:54]** started. But still, I am very happy that I came here and Professor Makau offered me the job and
78 picked me over some very, very qualified candidates. So my wife even got me a cup that says The Big One.
79 [Laughter] I still use that cup 20 years later. It's on my desk. If I remember correctly the original question
80 was I published a text book in China, yes. I was 23 years old and in 1979 I was enrolled in the – I became a
81 Master's student in English. If you know anything about the history of China, in China because of the
82 Cultural Revolution they stopped enrolling college students. And 1978 was the first year when they started
83 matriculation in college. So I was actually the second group of students they admitted into the college. And
84 so, I was hand picked by the – a professor to work with him on a textbook. And that textbook was used
85 widely in China by all the colleges and universities in their English programs. And actually he picked me
86 over some very important people today including the Chinese Ambassador to the United States.

87 **Makau:** *Wow.*

88 **Wang:** Some of my classmates in China, actually they are holding very responsible positions in
89 China today. One of them is the – you would call the Director of the Shanghai Municipal Library. One of
90 them is the CEO of the Party Cadre, the Academy in Shanghai. One of them is a member of the Communist
91 Party, the Central, the Standing Committee. So these are the people who stayed in China. But here is a side
92 note. That professor, my professor in China, his mother was the – American. His dad got his medical

93 degree from Purdue University and they went back to China. So this professor, his English was either
94 number one or number two in Shanghai back in the 70's and 80's. He knew a lot of people and he was very
95 influential. In 1979 he tried to match me up with the number one Chinese movie star. [Laugh] Actually if
96 you know something about the Chinese movie actresses, she is also active in the United States, her name is
97 Jung Chen. And she is actually a graduate of the CSU system. She graduated from CSU Northridge. Jung
98 Chen. They still have her on their website, the alumni. So Jung Chen. And she just won the equivalent of
99 the Best Actress Academy Award in China. She was 19 years old but she was a freshman in Shanghai,
100 International Studies at the University. But I was already a graduate student. I was an editor of a text book.
101 So of course, I said no. I was so handsome and I was so popular in China. So who was Jung Chen, right?
102 [Laughter] Just a movie actress.

103 **[13:53] Makau:** *Well, now you've told us what initially might have motivated you to interview at schools*
104 *on the West Coast. It includes things like weather and so on. But then when you came to the interview you*
105 *discovered that we were ridden with land mines and ammunition vaults in the place of classrooms. And that*
106 *we didn't even have blackboards let alone any other equipment for teaching. And you, being a person of*
107 *some height sitting in an elementary school chair to counsel your students. So I am wondering, what do you*
108 *recall about -- in the face of all of that what motivated you to come to our campus? It couldn't have been*
109 *the weather. You could have gone to Oregon or Washington. What motivated you at the end of the day?*
110 *[Laughter]*

111 **Wang:** Oh, this is fun. Professor Josina Makau is my mentor. She is my confidante and she is my
112 cheerleader and she is my everything. I have learned so much from her. As a matter of fact, the – I was
113 hired in April in the year 1995. Then in July we came – and they paid for us to come here to develop some
114 curriculum for them. And Professor Makau invited me to her house. Of course she wine and dine me.
115 And after that she sat me down and she said, “Qun, what do you know about Invitational Communication?”
116 I said, “Invitational what?” [Laughter]. Back then I was still teaching Argumentative Communication.

117 Happily. In Wisconsin. I had never heard of Invitational Communication because my specialty is literary
118 studies. But that's when I learned invitational communication. Now I know something about invitational
119 communication. It's all about growth. It's all about transformation. It's all about sensitivity to the setting,
120 occasion and audience. And so the question is of course what else motivated me besides the big blue thing
121 and the weather and the climate and some other stuff. It's the Vision Statement. It's the people. It's the
122 opportunity to be in a new campus. It's the culture. There are several anecdotes here. At Wisconsin, people
123 **[16:34]** were very respectful but 95% of the people there are Scandinavian. So if you are Anglo Saxon you
124 are not a part of the "in" group. [Laughs] But they always called me Mr. Wen. Dr. Wen. And when I had
125 the layover in San Francisco coming here for the July session a Black dude, an African American
126 gentleman and he saw me, he said, "Oh, Mr. Wang." I had tears in my eyes. See, only on the West Coast
127 they know how to pronounce your last name correctly. That's a small incident but that's a big cultural event
128 to me. So the San Francisco 40% the Chinese population, so that's why it's like coming home. And indeed,
129 when you talk to a lot of Chinese here on the West Coast when they move to San Francisco the first thing
130 they say is "It's like coming home." And their sense of pride. The second thing is that they feel poor. They
131 don't have enough money. In California the cost of living is so high. [Laughs] So at the University of
132 Wisconsin I have to give them credit that I was the first Asian American they hired. But during the
133 interview, well the whole department was there, all 20 of them, professors, English professors, one person
134 said that, "Oh, on your vitae you said that you could teach Asian American Literature but you were not
135 born in this country so what do you know about Asian American literature?" So my immediate response
136 would be that does this mean that if you were not Shakespeare's contemporary you were not qualified to
137 teach Shakespeare?" [Laughs] The reason we study for our Ph.D. is because we are able to learn. We are
138 human beings. We go to school and through education we can learn. In fact now I teach Asian American
139 Literature, I teach African American Literature and although my specialty is American and British
140 Literature and American Drama, as a matter of fact. But again, you have to give the University of

141 Wisconsin credit because they did secure some kind of grant for me to develop the first, one of the first
142 **[19:26]** Asian American Studies course in the country. So in 1991 I offered the Asian American Studies
143 course in Wisconsin. And in 1992 Hollywood somehow got word.

144 **Makau:** *Wow.*

145 **Wang:** Yeah, they made movies of the three of the books I used in that course. Oliver Stone made
146 “Heaven and Earth” which was based on *the When Heaven and Earth Changed Places. A Child of War, a*
147 *Woman of Peace*, by Le Ly Hayslip. And also Amy Tan’s, *The Joy Luck Club* and also David Henry
148 Hwang’s *M Butterfly*. So I used those in 1991 in my Asian American Studies course and then Hollywood
149 made those three movies in 1992. So wasn’t that interesting. But anyway, so at Wisconsin I was just given
150 the curriculum, the courses and they say, “Go teach.” But here at CSUMB I was told to design, develop the
151 curriculum, help us teach. So you see the difference. Opportunities. And here is the Vision Statement, help
152 us build a culture. So that’s what motivated me to come here. So still, I sort of tell my students the same
153 thing. I always joke with my students in the beginning of the semester. I say, “Do you know how many
154 campuses we have in the CSU system?” Not a clue. [Laughs] “Do you know how many students we have
155 in the system?” Not a clue. “Okay, we have 23 campuses in the system. We have 460,000 students in the
156 system. Do you realize some states they do not have that many people? Right. Some small states, they have
157 only 300,000 in North Dakota. So. Dakota, I don’t know the population in those states, right? We are that
158 strong. We are number one in terms of student enrollment, the largest public university system in the
159 country. Usually when I teach at the University of Wisconsin I would check out all the campuses. Osh
160 Kosh, Green Bay, Milwaukee, Madison, River Falls, stuff like that. And so here is the pop quiz. Where did
161 our former governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger get his B.A. from? It’s University of Wisconsin, Lake
162 Superior. Through correspondence. And he never set foot. So who did all the work? Maybe his secretaries,
163 right? But after that the campus was expecting big donations. He never wanted to have anything to do with

164 [22:17] that campus. Anyway, so the Wisconsin has 26 campuses including research universities, Madison
165 and Milwaukee. And then 11 teaching institutions. And the community colleges. They are number three.
166 SUNY number two. CSU number one with 460,000 – so I checked out all their campuses. And after
167 moving to California I checked out all the campuses and here is my conclusion. And it's not pretty. Bar
168 none, CSUMB has the ugliest campus in the whole system. Right away, for goodness sake. It used to be a
169 military base, right? The buildings and colors do not match. So of all the campuses you picked the
170 CSUMB, why did you come here? Well, I always ask them the question. CSUMB used to be people's
171 second choice. They could not get into Long Beach. They could not get into San Diego State. But now it
172 quickly becomes people's first choice because we have HCOM [Human Communication], we have
173 Biology, we have Kinesiology, we have Psychology, the people they all come here. "Why do you come
174 here?" "No, you don't come here for the buildings. You come here for the Vision Statement. You come
175 here for people. You come here for an education." It's because people say, "You come to CSUMB, you pay
176 for public education, you get a private one." Because all the class sizes are so small. They run from 25
177 people to 40 people. But if you go to Long Beach State, you go to San Diego State chances are for GE
178 [General Education] classes, you get into a class with 150 – 200 – 500 people. And you can't even get into
179 those classes. So that's why you come to CSUMB. So that answers your question why do we come to
180 CSUMB.

181 **Makau:** *Well, let me ask a follow-up. You mentioned the Vision several times. And people have*
182 *different perspectives regarding what it is that really drives them when they look at the Vision and different*
183 *interpretations of the core values. What are some of the core values, if you wouldn't mind sharing, in the*
184 *Vision as you understand that document and what it represents that particularly move you.*

185 [24:34] **Wang:** That's an excellent question and that's usually the kind of question we would like to relay
186 to our students. And that's the kind of question we would ask our prospective – the kind of faculty we
187 would like to hire. So they have a clear idea of the kind of working environment they'd like to get

188 themselves into. So my understanding is that the diversity, multiculturalism to serve underrepresented
189 students because those are, they are our future, right? And they are America. And so the ... the... you look
190 at the campus, you look at what kind of students we have on campus and those are the students that we
191 want to have. So there's that big argument on campus about the – having the multilingual students on
192 campus for their deficiencies or assets. You know, there's that big debate on campus. And then we always
193 treat them that they bring different cultures to campus and they help us to build campus culture. And we
194 need to emphasize their strength and to support them, to help them learn. At the same time we can learn a
195 lot of stuff from them as well. So multiculturalism, diversity, technology, the multilingualism, the
196 community service. So the ... and I think those are the things I'd tell we need to emphasize in the Vision
197 Statement. [Chuckles] The Vision Statement has been debated on campus forever. Sometimes we deviate
198 from the Vision Statement but the – thank God we have the Faculty Senate and we have some faculty who
199 fight very vehemently to uphold the Vision Statement. I think we need to stay the course with the original
200 Vision Statement.

201 **Makau:** *I've heard you say that among the really core values and principles that you continue to*
202 *find inspiring include a commitment to equipping students for the globally interdependent world in which*
203 *they will live, and grounded in an assets based approach to pedagogy truly recognizing students' strengths*
204 *and their sense of responsibility and their commitment to service. So, have I captured correctly the essence*
205 *of what you're saying?*

206 **Wang:** Absolutely. So that we can build intercultural communication and understanding and the
207 communication. Because if you treat them as problematic then you are creating barriers instead of
208 understandings and communications.

209 **Makau:** *You want to really foster human flourishing through your assets based approach to*
210 *pedagogy in a multicultural globally interdependent world.*

211 **Wang:** That's closely tied to Invitational Communication. So to be respectful and sensitive to
212 people who are different from you. Right? To different communities and different cultures. I learned.
213 [Laughs]

214 **Makau:** *When you arrived what were some of your expectations and hopes? What did you aspire*
215 *to achieve?*

216 **[28:06] Wang:** I was just so thrilled. I was in Paradise! Oh, what a change of scene! What an opportunity.
217 And this would be great for me to develop new curriculum, to test new ideas. Oh, and also with the Vision
218 Statement, interdisciplinarity. And we can do so many new things. Because if you go to traditional school,
219 right, your hands are tied. They just say "Oh, here's a textbook and here's the curriculum. Go teach." And
220 you can't do anything else. Even when you grade students you have to use a curve. But here you can just be
221 yourself. [Laughs] As a founding faculty probably other people told you the same story. When we first
222 came we could pick our own Institute, pick our own Center and we could go teach whatever subject we felt
223 like we had interest in. That was the good old days. [Laughs] That was really fun. Essentially I am just so
224 happy. I am doing what I really enjoy. As a matter of fact, I started some ideas at the University of
225 Wisconsin but I finished all those projects. I published three books at CSUMB. Those manuscripts were not
226 completed at Wisconsin but they were completed at CSUMB. So without the kind of support, the
227 infrastructure, the encouragement by Professor Makau, by the CSUMB, I would not be able to accomplish
228 those goals. So I have achieved all of those. [Laughs] If you want to hear some funny stories? Can we tell
229 jokes?

230 **Makau:** *Oh, yes. People will appreciate that.*

231 **Wang:** Don't be late to meetings. [Laughs]

232 **Makau:** *Oh, ho! What happens if you are late to meetings?* [Chuckles]

233 **Wang:** What happens if you are late to meetings? Professor Josina Makau is just – she's bad. She's
234 really bad.

235 **Makau:** *Uh-oh! Maybe you'd better not tell this story!*

236 **Wang:** We were so busy when we first started there were so many meetings. Sometimes they
237 scheduled three meetings at the same time in the same room. [Laughs] Of course you couldn't have all
238 those meetings. And sometimes the – if you were late to a meeting there were consequences. Yours truly,
239 here's what happened to yours truly. One time I was 15 minutes late to a meeting I was appointed the
240 Interim Director of the Interdisciplinary Studies Master's Program at CSUMB for three years. [Laughter]
241 So after that, I was always early and punctual and early to meetings. That's how you learn your lesson.

242 **Makau:** *How lucky were we that you were late so that we could secure that appointment with your
243 expertise. And you did such a fine job. What, if any obstacles did you encounter along the way?*

244 **[31:41] Wang:** We – this is both from the personal perspective as well as from the University-wide
245 perspective. Of course we're human, right? We're fallible and we make mistakes. Case in point, we are the
246 21st campus in the CSU system. So we say that we're the 21st campus for the 21st century. And San Marcos
247 was the 20th campus in the system. It took them five years to plan, design, to discuss how to build the
248 campus. And it took them another five years to build. Finally anyway they opened. It took them ten years to
249 open the campus. And when they opened they only admitted upper division students, junior and senior
250 transfer students. It took CSUMB how many? Ten months to open campus. And when we opened we
251 admitted all levels of students. Freshmen through graduate students. So that was – I think it was a mistake.
252 But it was a political decision because it was an election year. That was part of the reason. People say that it
253 was because Leon Panetta was the Chief of Staff so that's why Bill Clinton came here for the inauguration.
254 Leon Panetta says, "Oh, I scheduled his itinerary." So he had to come to CSUMB because Leon Panetta
255 was a native son. But there are some other reasons. It's a military base conversion, the first one in the
256 country, right? So a political decision and all that stuff. So we admitted students at all different levels.
257 Probably we rushed things a little bit. Well, then on the other hand if we didn't rush things maybe I
258 wouldn't have my job. I don't know. It's a blessing in disguise. I have no idea. So in the early stage people

259 were working like crazy and we didn't have classrooms and Professor Makau knows this very well. We
260 were thinking about renting military tents, right? To teach classes. And we had to rent space from Stilwell,
261 the elementary school to teach classes. So those were the early struggles we went through. I am just
262 wondering if we took our time and if we paced ourselves what would have happened. So those are the
263 things I think that in retrospect maybe some things -

264 **[34:32] Makau:** *Yes, so if we had been given the option of more time, which wasn't an option at the time.*
265 *Because we were told then as I recall that if we didn't open we would never open, this was just the way it*
266 *was. Do you remember that?*

267 **Wang:** That is a good point. Because the – San Jose State and we were – remember the one -

268 **Makau:** *So it wasn't our choice.*

269 **Wang:** No. There was one article that said that this is a gift horse of which we couldn't afford to
270 look inside the mouth. They had a satellite campus in Salinas and they didn't want us to open another CSU
271 campus. Yes. So they didn't like us.

272 **Makau:** *Now in retrospect as you look back what would you say from your perspective were some*
273 *of your greatest contributions? I could list a litany of them but from your perspective what feels the most*
274 *satisfying to you in terms of your role, your contributions to this beautiful campus?*

275 **Wang:** So, I don't mean to be a braggadocio. [Laughs]

276 **Makau:** *Please do! I'm counting on that! I'm counting on it. We're all counting on you sharing*
277 *honestly what you deem to be some of your great successes. I know you've had so many.*

278 **Wang:** At several different levels. On the personal level, it was at CSUMB – well, all together I
279 have published close to 80 articles. Book chapters and stories and three books at CSUMB. I mentioned
280 before some of them were collected by the Harvard, Princeton, Yale and internationally. And also I am a
281 member of – I'm on the editorial boards of several publications. But the – I'm very, very proud of the fact
282 that some of my students and these are the Literary and the Film studies students, they have done very well

283 after graduating from the HCOM. One of them was one of 40 students invited by Harvard, all expenses
284 paid, for a campus tour at Harvard University. But against my recommendation he rejected Harvard but
285 graduated from Stanford University. Then he became the Associate Dean and the Director of the Graduate
286 School – the Director of Graduate School, the Recruitment Office at UC Santa Cruz. And then he got into
287 the four doctoral programs: New York University, University of Washington, UCLA and Michigan,
288 University of Michigan. And he decided to go to the University of Michigan because it was a free ride. He
289 still wanted me to write a recommendation. I said, “Can’t you get a recommendation from Stanford?” And
290 he said, “No, I just like you.” And also when I was the Interim Advisor for Journalism, one of my students
291 [38:12] got into Berkeley. Then the . . . she published a piece, it was the front page of *The New York Times*.
292 I’m very proud. And one of my students got her Master’s degree from the Gonzaga University. Now she is
293 the Head Coach of Basketball. Gonzaga University is perennially ranked as a women’s basketball coach,
294 perennially in the top 25. And last year she was the National Coach of the Year.

295 **Makau:** *Wow.*

296 **Wang:** So you said, “Okay, what can you do with a degree from HCOM from CSUMB?” There
297 are a lot of things you can do. It all depends on where you want to go. So I still remember that one of the
298 questions Professor Makau asked me during the interview was what do you enjoy the most in your
299 teaching? I said it was the classroom interaction with students. I really enjoy the dynamic interaction with
300 students in the classroom. So it’s my students. I’m very proud of many of them. They got into Berkeley,
301 Stanford, Columbia. And those are the prestigious schools. Northwestern. And also at the Division level, I
302 have designed curriculum such as [HCOM] 211 [Reading, Writing, and Critical Thinking], and the
303 [HCOM] 225, [Literature, Film, and Culture] which is one of the most popular courses on campus. 40
304 students every semester. Two sections always fill up. Waiting list. Even in the winter people pay \$1200.
305 It’s a full 25 students that winter and summer.

306 **Makau:** *Can you share with us for those who don't know what 211 and 225, what are those*
307 *courses?*

308 **Wang:** 211 is EngCom [English Communication] They are required. It's equivalent to Freshman
309 Comp. Communication Studies, an English requirement class. 225 is Literature, Film and Culture. So it's a
310 course that introduces students to film studies and also culture studies in class. And also at the Upper
311 Division level I teach American Drama. We watch, *Who is Afraid of Virginia Wolf*, the old version, 1965.
312 Black and white. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

313 **Makau:** *Oh, my goodness. The opposite of Invitational Communication. [Laughter]*

314 **Wang:** That's right! Because they drink too much! Yes, they stop communication altogether.
315 That's right. But hey, she was married twice – 8 times. Twice to the same person, Richard Burton.

316 **Makau:** *Oh, my goodness.*

317 **Wang:** And in the Asian American, the literature, I also teach major Pro Seminar and the
318 Capstone. And also I am very proud of – I'm very proud of the fact that I was the one who designed
319 English Waiver program for HCOM. That's the English Subject Matter program. That's a high school
320 English teacher program. So the students, they go through that program they can go directly to the teaching
321 – the Single Subject Teaching Credential program, one of three or four Teaching Credential programs on
322 campus here. So that's the Division. And also I served on the Faculty Senate. And I served on the – was
323 one of the founding members of the GE [General Education] Committee.

324 **Makau:** *Yes. Yes.*

325 **[42:04] Wang:** We reviewed 1200 courses. When we converted from the ULR system, the University
326 Learning Requirement System to the General Education System, so I served on that committee for two
327 years. I also served on the Faculty Affairs Committee, Faculty Senate and some of the other committees.
328 Well, I think I've done my share.

329 **Makau:** *I think so.*

330 **Wang:** And right now I'm following the President's cue and also the Provost's cue. We are trying
331 to build connections with China. Knock on wood. If everything pans out the – we might be able to bring
332 100 Chinese students, and these are matriculated Chinese students – to HCOM next Fall. David Reichard,
333 the Director of HCOM and Jennifer Fletcher, the Director of the English Waiver Program, the English
334 Subject Matter Program and I will be meeting with Tim Engle, the Dean of Extended Education and
335 International Students Services, the college, will be meeting on December 14th. We already have four or
336 five colleges and universities in China who have signed MOU's.

337 **Makau:** *Wow, that's very exciting.*

338 **Wang:** To bring them to HCOMM.

339 **Makau:** *It relates in some sense, I have to assume, with the extraordinary dream you have. Can*
340 *you tell us a little bit about your China dream?*

341 **Wang:** [Laughs] You can't hide anything from Professor Makau, right? It's what happened was
342 that my dad is 86 years old. So I have made a commitment and he lives in Shanghai by himself with the
343 live-in housekeeper. So I have made a commitment to go visit him twice a year. But when I'm in Shanghai
344 I said, "Hey, I spent 26 years in China and it's time to give back." So I said, "Well, since I'm in Shanghai I
345 might as well just give a lecture at a college or somewhere to help the Chinese students." I started that and
346 they said, "Why can't I just continue?" And that becomes my China dream. So, so far I have covered 11
347 institutions of higher learning in Shanghai! So if I continue . . . there are only 33 institutions of higher
348 learning in Shanghai. I have covered 11, so if I continue. . . and that's become my China dream. It started
349 as hobby and now it's become OCD! [Laughs] I can't stop and people are helping me. So someday I'm
350 going to become famous in China. "There's a crazy professor from CSUMB who is trying to cover all the
351 colleges and universities!" I just came back from Shanghai. During the Fall Break I went there. On
352 Monday I gave a lecture titled "Necessitating Theoretical Studies in Literary Criticism" at Shanghai
353 International Studies University which is the number one university of foreign language studies in

354 Shanghai and may be number one or number two in the whole China, on Monday. And on Tuesday I gave
355 a lecture entitled “Re/presenting Contemporary American Cultures in Literature and Film” to the students
356 at Shanghai’s Second Polytechnic University. So I covered two on this trip and it was a five-day trip.

357 **[46:00] Makau:** *And you will no doubt be building your already strong reputation there and networking*
358 *and providing some visibility for CSU Monterey Bay and possibly some reciprocal partnerships as you are*
359 *already in the process of doing, so furthering yet all the extraordinary contributions you’ve made. It’s quite*
360 *remarkable.*

361 **Wang:** That reminds me that after my lecture at Shanghai second Polytechnic University I brought
362 back an agreement from that University with CSUMB.

363 **Makau:** *Wow. Reciprocal partnerships which of course is one of the very important values in our*
364 *Vision Statement. So here you are continuing the dream, really, that is the Vision of CSU Monterey Bay,*
365 *bringing it to life even 20 years later. It’s quite extraordinary.*

366 **Wang:** All of this is just to make sure that Professor Josina Makau 20 years ago hired the right
367 person. [Laughs]

368 **Makau:** *Oh, my goodness. There is no doubt there, I can assure. I am definitely not alone in*
369 *feeling such gratitude. You gave up tenure. You gave up your Associate Professor status to make the move.*
370 *To take the leap you had extraordinary courage then. You continue to have extraordinary courage now.*
371 *And we as a whole University community are so fortunate that you chose to make CSU Monterey Bay your*
372 *home. Thank you so much for everything that you have done. Before we close, do you have any other*
373 **[47:45]** *statements or thoughts or stories that you’d like to share with the future basically? People will be*
374 *hearing this lecture, this interview, rather, for some time to come.*

375 **Wang:** I think that I made the right decision coming to CSUMB. One day I was doing student
376 advising. There were about 5000 prospective students and the parents visiting CSUMB. There were people
377 running around campus. When I was driving off campus I saw some students taking pictures against the

378 sunset at the sign. At the entrance, Imjin Road [General Jim Moore entrance] that says California State
379 University Monterey Bay. If you don't know the story the rocks were actually donated by Clint Eastwood
380 because he owns a quarry. So we said, "Oh, why can't you donate some rocks?" And he did. So we did
381 with that sign. So I had tears in my eyes. I said, "Oh, I made the right decision coming here." I think I did
382 that with Josina, right? We did the advising at that time.

383 **Makau:** *Yes, we did. Yes, we did. It was a beautiful, beautiful experience. Beautiful experience.*

384 **Wang:** Josina and I, we share so many things in common. We get so excited when we see students.

385 **Makau:** *We do. I know. I had tears in my eyes, too.*

386 **Wang:** We've been teaching college 35 years. We need to calm down, right?

387 **Makau:** *I agree, I agree. What is that?*

388 **Wang:** We walk into the classroom, we get so excited. Sometimes students say, "Dr. Wang, calm
389 down. This is our life, our education." We get so excited.

390 **Makau:** *Yes, but it's a beautiful thing, so beautiful.*

391 **Wang:** And I was just thinking that we have, over the years, we have had some great, great writers
392 and critics visiting campus. Cornell West, Sandra Cisneros Narrows.

393 **Makau:** *Adrienne Rich.*

394 **Wang:** Adrienne Rich. Jeanne [Wakatsuki] Houston. And Le Ly Hayslip.

395 **Makau:** *[Anthony] Appiah*

396 **Wang:** Yes. And Adrienne Rich once told me – I had my pictures taken with her.

397 **Makau:** *Yes, yes.*

398 **Wang:** In Frances Payne Adler's, the, office. And Adrienne Rich was the one who said that "In
399 CSUMB I see the future of America."

400 **Makau:** *Yes, yes.*

