



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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UC Santa Cruz students and employees campaign for diversity and economic justice, 2005-09

- Student Living Wage Movement (late 1990s - mid 2000s)

April

2005

to: February

2009

Country: United States

Location City/State/Province: Santa Cruz, California

Goals:

"We want affirmative diversity!

- Affirmative diversity means giving custodians and staff living wages and creating an environment where they want to stay.
- Affirmative diversity means funding, supporting and recognizing student organizations that provide crucial support for retaining and outreaching US based underrepresented racial and gender groups.
- Affirmative diversity means hiring and retaining faculty of color and faculty from all racial and gender backgrounds who teach and research underrepresented groups, race and ethnicity. Understanding the operations of race and ethnicity is crucial to the education of all UCSC students.
- Affirmative diversity means being committed to achieving equal results not merely equal treatment.
- Affirmative diversity means taking proactive steps to ensure that all spaces on campus are safe environments free of the consistent racism, sexism and homophobia that pervade all university settings."[2]

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 001. Public speeches
- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 016. Picketing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 062. Student strike
- 097. Protest strike

- 106. Industry strike
- 171. Nonviolent interjection

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 038. Marches
- 107. Sympathy strike

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 4th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support

Methods in 5th segment:

- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 061. Boycott of social affairs
- 062. Student strike

Methods in 6th segment:

- 003. Declarations by organizations and institutions
- 016. Picketing
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 097. Protest strike
- 106. Industry strike
- 171. Nonviolent interjection

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Economic Justice

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- employees
- students

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Javier Armas- University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) Student Worker Coalition for Justice (SWCJ) member

Julian Posadas- UCSC American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) representative

More SWCJ students and AFSCME employee leaders participated but their names are not known

Partners:

Coalition of University Employees (CCUE)

University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) union

UC clerical workers (CUE)

UCSC Student groups: MEChA, S.I.N. SAW, Student Initiated Outreach (SIO), SOAR,

External allies:

UCSC faculty

Involvement of social elites:

Tim Fitamaurice- city council member

Former Senate Pres. Pro Tem John Burton (D) mediated the settlement between UCSC employees and administration and sympathized with the AFSCME activists.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- 1000 UCSC students
- Coalition of Employees (CUE)(enter and exit)
- Tim Fitamaurice (enter and exit)
- Univeristy Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) (enter and exit)

Groups in 2nd Segment:

- UCSC student groups (enter and exit)

Groups in 3rd Segment:

- Angela Ruiz

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

- John Burton

Segment Length: *approximately 7.5 months*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

UCSC Chancellor Denice Denton

UCSC Chancellor George Blumenthal

UCSC President Dynes

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

April 2005- 19 students arrested

October 18 2006- Campus police pepper spray 12 students and arrest 3 students

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

2 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

1 point out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

During the last segment of the campaign, AFSCME workers were spearheading protests and strikes, whereas student participation was at a minimum. However, the campaign did succeed in raising wages for many workers

When the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) hired Chancellor Denice Denton in 2004 the transition entailed her earning a salary of \$282,000 a year and \$600,000 of renovations made on her future house of residence, including a controversial \$30,000 dog run. This became a topic of debate; students as well as media critics quickly brought these details to light and demanded accountability for the choices of spending at the University. Under these circumstances, employees at the University began to call attention to the fact that they earned a less than living wage salary, and students began broadcasting the tuition increase as well as the problematic lack of diversity among faculty members. UCSC students and employees so began a long-term campaign with the goal of achieving “affirmative diversity” at UCSC. These were the demands of the employee-student campaign:

- *We want affirmative diversity! Affirmative diversity means giving custodians and staff living wages and creating an environment where they want to stay. [It] means funding, supporting and recognizing student organizations that provide crucial support for retaining and outreaching US based underrepresented racial and gender groups. [It] means hiring and retaining faculty of color and faculty from all racial and gender backgrounds who teach and research underrepresented groups, race and ethnicity. Understanding the operations of race and ethnicity is crucial to the education of all UCSC students. [It] means being committed to achieving equal results not merely equal treatment. [It] means taking proactive steps to ensure that all spaces on campus are safe environments free of the consistent racism, sexism and homophobia that pervade all university settings. [2]*

In light of Chancellor Denton’s employment, members of the UCSC student group, the Student and Worker Coalition for Justice (SWCJ) began carefully organizing for large-scale protests. On 14 April 2005, over 1000 students blockaded the two campus entrances in order to demonstrate solidarity with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) in their statewide strike to improve their contract with employers. The Coalition of University Employees (CUE) also struck in solidarity. This large-scale demonstration was followed shortly by a slight improvement in the AFSCME contract.

Still, UCSC students put pressure on the administration to more generously allocate funds to fit the needs of underrepresented

employees and students. Activists compared the UCSC salaries with the salaries of institutions nearby in order to make the extent of the problem very clear to administration. UCSC employee unions and SWCJ members continued to collaboratively organize and strike in. On 7 March 2006, student activists marched to Chancellor Denton's house making their demands that she support the workers. Participation spread among UCSC student groups in honor of the annual "Day Without an Immigrant" May 1st demonstration. Around 5,000 students, workers, immigrants, and allies participated in the march.

UCSC employees continued to fight UC administration to prevent loss of further benefits. On 23 May 2006, AFSCME and SWCJ collaborated in protesting Chancellor Denton's 'Brown Bag' event where she invited staff to bring their lunch and discuss UCSC campus issues. They gathered over 1700 petitions to support worker justice.

On 24 June 2006, the main target of the student activists, Chancellor Denise Denton, suddenly committed suicide. In response to her death, and her part in the campaign, student leader Josh Sonnenfeld wrote, "It was obvious that Denton was making a strong attempt to address issues that had been ignored by numerous previous Chancellors and the institution as a whole. This included her financial support of student initiated outreach and retention programs, and also a recent situation where... [the Chancellor] called an emergency meeting of faculty and grad students of color" [4]. Although her role as Chancellor caused activists to aim their concerns at her, she was not completely hostile. The efforts of the students and activists were quickly connected with Chancellor Denton's death. The media blamed, or implicitly blamed, protesters for causing her stress. But the controversy surrounding Chancellor Denton's death did not end the student-employee campaign.

The following school year, a UC Regent's meeting was held at UCSC on 18 October 2006. Under these circumstances, AFSCME and SWCJ held a march and rally, seeking living wages for under-paid custodians. The large turnout and the inclusion of activists voicing separate concerns led to the subsequent disruption of the UC Regents meeting. Three students were arrested and, for the first time in history, the UC police pepper-sprayed students at UCSC.

On 21 June 2007 the UCSC students and workers came together for a day of protest in light of the University's decision to fire dining hall worker, Angela Ruiz for attending a protest during her lunch hour. After the day of protest, Angela Ruiz was re-hired. In June 2008 Mr. George Blumenthal was inaugurated as Chancellor of UCSC. SWCJ and AFSCME protested his inauguration because he did not publicly support their campaign. The activists continued to rally and march for a fair contract. During the protest, they obstructed, for three hours, the intersections of Bay Street and Mission Street. In solidarity with the scheduled protest, graduation speakers refused to give their speeches.

During the last segment of the campaign, UCSC AFSCME members joined in a larger movement across California to end poverty wages and improve contracts. Student participation was not documented during this segment of the campaign. From 14 to 18 July, UCSC AFSCME members struck for a living wage and a fairer contract. After the long struggle, the efforts of the student-employee campaign finally came to a conclusion. Through January and February of 2009, AFSCME service workers and the UC settled on a contract that ensured a living wage, seniority benefits, and a statewide minimum wage for their classification of job. Although this did not accomplish the complete mission of the SWCJ student group, and collaborative student-employee campaign, it did accomplish the task of the AFSCME employee group.

Research Notes

Influences:

2) AFSCME members orchestrated a larger statewide movement for living wages and improved benefits on University of California campuses. This individual UCSC campaign benefited from the pressure and organization of AFSCME across California at the time.

Sources:

[1] Chiriboga, Laura. "Workers, Students Rally in Denton's Driveway." March 14 2006. City on A Hill Press. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. http://www.lrwarehouse.com/PDF/2006/2006-03/LU_1529.pdf

[2] Diversity Coalition. Affirmative Diversity Talking Points.” Jun 6, 2006. Santa Cruz IMC. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/06/06/18272511.php>

[3] Schevitz, Tanya & Wallack, Todd. “Santa Cruz/ Chancellor’s residence wish list made public...” March 30, 2006. San Francisco Chronicle. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. <http://www.sfgate.com/education/article/SANTA-CRUZ-Chancellor-s-residence-wish-list-2520667.php>

[4] Sonnenfeld, Josh. “A Complex Tragedy: Denise Denton and UC Santa Cruz.” July 2, 2006. Santa Cruz IMC. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2006/07/02/18284785.php>

[5] Sonnenfeld, Josh. ”An Incomplete History of Activism at UC Santa Cruz- Timeline. Nov 8, 2007. Santa Cruz IMC. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2007/11/08/18459259.php>

[6] UC Santa Cruz Disorientation Guide 2011- 2012. Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. http://www.campusactivism.org/server-new/uploads/2011_ucsc_disorientation_guide.pdf

[7] Works- Shattered Dream September/October 2007. AFSCME Accessed: Feb 3, 2013. <http://www.afscme.org/news-publications/publications/afscme-works/pdf/WorksSepOct07.pdf>

Additional Notes:

UCSC Chancellor Denise Denton was hired in 2004 and targetted by activists in the affirmative diversity campaign. She committed suicide on 24 June 2006.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

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Links:

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/wave-campaigns/student-living-wage-movement-late-1990s-mid-2000s>

[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-student-participants>

[3] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/included-participation-more-one-social-class>