Wolak, William (1975 – 2007)
Professor, Theater Arts
Chair, Drama Dept.

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By Ken Beauchamp

Transcription by Shameela Maskeen,
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Subjects: Change in climate from 1970s to 2005 – intellectual freedom, support for innovation and risk-taking; change in student demands regarding core of curriculum; growth of administrative staff relative to teaching staff; core attitudes change in faculty conception of nature of the job.
BEAUCHAMP: Alright, so first question: what years were you at the University?

WOLAK: Well, you know, I came in...’75, then I retired in 2007.

BEAUCHAMP: I came in ’69, and retired in 2007, same as you.

BEAUCHAMP: What were your official titles?

WOLAK: I came in as an Associate Professor and I got promoted to full Professor. Then I was Department Chair for 3 times; 2 regular terms, and 1 when the department sort of collapsed, and I was in with somebody else, and we got down to two people for a short time. And then, otherwise, I was a teacher... and, Faculty Guest Artist.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) were you officially listed as that-Faculty Guest Artist?

WOLAK: Yes-Faculty Guest Artist...

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHINGLY) Oh, I love that.

WOLAK: ...because that’s the same thing they do at the Conservatory. All the Conservatory people have to give concerts...

BEAUCHAMP: Sure--all the time.

WOLAK: ...so it’s sort of Faculty Guest Artist.

BEAUCHAMP: Right. And you’re on the stage a lot, or you were on the stage a lot.

BEAUCHAMP: What brought you to Pacific?

WOLAK: I left the University of Georgia. I taught there for 7 years and quite frankly, the department chair there was fully certifiable.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh, a standard issue theater arts guy? (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: (LAUGHS) Yeah. And I was just going crazy. So we just up and moved. And looked around and interviewed at UOP with Sy Kahn, and he interested me...pretty interesting guy. Literate, and passionate, and it was very interesting, so I came here, and we started to work. I came when there was a very interesting demographic here: the cluster colleges were just fading out-

BEAUCHAMP: Right-

WOLAK: - and I think Raymond was still around, sort of. And then, that whole faculty-
BEAUCHAMP: Got shifted over to COP.

WOLAK: But, there was a cluster of students here that were outstanding. Just outstanding, and I had just finished teaching graduate students, you know.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh, sure.

WOLAK: And these people matched up pretty well.

BEAUCHAMP: Which was pretty amazing.

WOLAK: It was-it was very amazing. And it was a large department; we had about 45 or 50 majors, and there were trips to Europe. And Fallon House in Columbia was running-

BEAUCHAMP: Running well-

WOLAK: -yeah, so it was a pretty interesting place, and the facilities were less than charming (BEAUCHAMP LAUGHS)...we were promised they would improve--the stage was the lecture hall in the old pharmacy building.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah; the Rotunda.

WOLAK: Yes, the Rotunda. But, it was all interesting. It was all interesting, and there were some good productions, there were bright, confident students, I mean students like Kurt Rinehart who was very exceptional, very talented, and he would write papers--he wrote like a dream. Well, his father was a full professor of journalism at Berkeley.

WOLAK: So, I call him at his home one day, it was something--we were going to schedule extra rehearsals, and Vincent Price answered the phone. They had Vincent Price do their phone thing. (BOTH LAUGH) Because his father knew many, many, many people, so that was a charge-it was interestingly. We had Suzy Gage was very talented, very gorgeous; she was Esther William's daughter. And, David Kelly who, for years, has been the mainstay at Berkeley Rep and at the Oregon Shakes.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh...and he's an outstanding actor.

WOLAK: Excellent.

BEAUCHAMP: I've seen him in a number of productions; he is extraordinary.

WOLAK: Yes. So, I got people like that. Charlie Fee, who founded the Idaho Shakespeare Festival...I mean, I looked at these people, and said, kind of, wow!

BEAUCHAMP: (CHUCKLES) these are undergrads-

WOLAK: These are undergrads, and they were very good, so it started and we- you know-we did interesting things; we did some new plays, we did recent releases. We had a very generous budget (our “other” budget). So, you know, we were equipped, we were doing quite well.
BEAUCHAMP: You actually had money for scholarships.

WOLAK: Absolutely. We controlled it.

BEAUCHAMP: I remember that.

WOLAK: Merit Scholarships. Hence, we were able to get some good students, and that all changed very rapidly. And um...so things got tougher as the University experienced it’s never-ending financial pressure, which I think—it befell everybody. So that was, that was how I came here, and connected up with the people here. They were very good people here, at that time, I thought. There was a question there about the faculty, and I was very impressed. Tappan Monroe

BEAUCHAMP: Yes- Econ.

WOLAK: -he was, he was quite sharp and clear, and Arlen Hansen in the English department was just...very sharp.

BEAUCHAMP: Great wit.

WOLAK: -great wit, very sharp, and Bob Knighton. Just-very organized, very-

BEAUCHAMP: (CHUCKLES) Precise.

WOLAK: Yes, very precise. Bob Cox. I mean there were just good people. George Buckbee over in the Conservatory: very, very creative. It was a very interesting place. I think the Bob Burns era had just ended-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, yes. And McCaffrey had just started.

WOLAK: Yes, he had just started, and I guess under Burns, there was a kind of nice, open atmosphere going on.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes there was, because Burns was open to all kinds of innovation.

WOLAK: Yeah. And, so we were able to experiment and do interdepartmental stuff, and it was really quite exciting.

BEAUCHAMP: Right. It was exciting.

WOLAK: It was. And, you know, we agitated for another space. For one thing, the pharmacy school was growing-

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) Yeah.

WOLAK: -which has continued like a mushroom. And so...they had just purchased the old Delta Campus, and I went over there, and it looked to me like a county prison.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) Why? All those concrete slab walls?
WOLAK: All concrete slabs, and industrial steel windows. OK!

BEAUCHAMP: Well, at the time, it was covered with those temporary buildings too.

WOLAK: That’s right.

WOLAK: -buildings, from World War II.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, it was a mess.

WOLAK: So, we were invited to go there [BOTH LAUGH].

BEAUCHAMP: You will like the South Campus!

WOLAK: So, I just brazenly walked into one of the buildings, and cleared it out to hold an acting class, so I could have some room. And it was a building that had a huge, topographical map of America showing heights and soil chemistry. It was a soil laboratory for an old Ag building. And there was another large part of that building that was a diesel engine repair shop. So, I sort of had squatters rights. There were other people looking for space.

BEAUCHAMP: Picking at it?

WOLAK: Picking at it, so we got what became the Drama building, which it still is, and we picked up a little bit of money from Mr. Long.

BEAUCHAMP: Really? I did not know that.

WOLAK: Ah, when we moved out of the Pharmacy building, he was told that these displaced persons were wandering around campus like the lost tribes of Israel-

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: -visibly. And so, out of his own generosity he dropped a quarter-mil or something, and they were able to revise that building.

BEAUCHAMP: Ah, that’s where the money came from. Ok.

WOLAK: So that was interesting. And we had air conditioning installed by virtue of the profit we were making from Fallon House; the school couldn’t afford to air condition anything, so we got an office wing air-conditioned.

BEAUCHAMP: From Fallon House money.

WOLAK: From Fallon House, yes. I don’t think that could be done today. The University has control of budgets-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes-it’s centralized.
WOLAK: -Right. And it’s all line item, and you didn’t have anywhere near that kind of flexibility.

BEAUCHAMP: Flexibility to do your own thing, yes.

WOLAK: So, that’s how we got over into the drama building, and they’re still there. We put up that little black box theatre, and then we got the Speech-Arts building from Delta College, which is the Long Theatre, and that was another part of his money...we got seats in there, and that relic was still being used, and made pretty good use of the facility; the facilities are...woefully inadequate for what’s going on in other universities in theater arts and performing programs. But, there it is: we did some good things. We did a lot of things: it was a time-when Fallon House was running-we were doing 15 productions a year. This is crazy.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, of course.

WOLAK: It’s absolutely crazy, and then everybody started to get tired, for some reason...

BEAUCHAMP: Well, yeah...I knew about the hours you guys were putting in, it was incredible.

WOLAK: So, they scaled back and scaled back and scaled back...and then, the students started to feel...I think they...they had a very high requirement for major credit hours required for graduation, I think it was...

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, higher than most.

WOLAK: About 141 and then they lowered it down so the students had a little more breathing room, but...it was a very high pressure situation for them; but again, remarkably, they got their classes done, we were allowed to rehearse until 11:30 or 12...they can’t do that anymore either.

BEAUCHAMP: Really? I didn’t know that.

WOLAK: Yeah. Because, you know, they close up the building and so forth and so on, so that situation allowed us to continue. Then the tuition costs went up. And as the tuition costs went up, the numbers of majors-

BEAUCHAMP: Went down-

WOLAK: Declined, yes. And so, now it’s a constant problem of finding enough people who are interested to sustain a program, and I...I think the program survived by what I call “shadow” majors.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

WOLAK: They are ostensiby business majors, or psych majors, or English majors. And they spend most of their time, over there at theatre arts.

BEAUCHAMP: Or something, or whatever-in the drama building-yes (LAUGHS).
WOLAK: (LAUGHS) and they get the degree that dad wanted them to get, and then they go on for their master’s degrees in theatre. That’s been a pretty typical routine: “I got your business degree—“

BEAUCHAMP: “-now let me do what I wanted to do in the first place.” (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: Yeah. So those, those were the early years and you remember those as well as I do, make all these efforts to get majors in. Whatever else McCaffrey did, he did finally realize that the University needed an endowment.

BEAUCHAMP: Which we didn’t have...

WOLAK: We didn’t have. The good church fathers just passed a collection plate that would do so little, that McCaffrey started to get people to give…and he had some connections, so he could start.

BEAUCHAMP: A little bit-

WOLAK: But it was hard. Why, I remember, the things that we did for recruiting, we looked at these little packets and went to visit various schools on these recruiting trips, and...I guess some students came, and we all gave sales pitches.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, Sid Turoff used to go on a lot of those. (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: Yeah. You—we did as many as we could, but, I think it was Smith was always pushing us to go. “Get to this place, get to this place, and get to this place...” and of course—you know the students became an issue with the University, to get enough of them, while their tuition costs started to increase, I think rather drastically.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, and continuously, every year. You know, and that... 3 or 4, 5 percent every year just pushes up, soon you have a big number.

WOLAK: Yep. Yep, but I think that’s necessary. The campus has changed so much with the various building projects that have been ongoing, and I jokingly said, just before I left, “There are going to be more Biology buildings than there are Biology students.” You know, they made such a push in that-

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah-

WOLAK: Pharmacy, Pre-Med, Pre-Dent.

WOLAK: All those programs.

BEAUCHAMP: And direct impact to Biology of course.

WOLAK: Yes, and so they...they have these “Taj Mahals” of Biological Sciences, going on all over the place, but I guess that’s...that’s the future.

BEAUCHAMP: Um, according to the current administration, it is, yes.
WOLAK: Yeah. I know I felt that at that time- that the Liberal Arts component was and should properly be the heart of a University System. I heard all that talk about “We’re going to eliminate the classical languages”…and they did eliminate geography. They made all these changes, and it crept closer and closer to vocational tech.

WOLAK: And yet, my old philosophy was: “You can go through a vocational tech. school and you’ll learn how to operate that machine very well, but if they change the machine, you’re in trouble.”

BEAUCHAMP: Means you got to go back to school.

WOLAK: Got to go back to school. Whereas, in the other approach, they could critically think...

BEAUCHAMP: And learn to learn.

WOLAK: Yeah, and learn. I was on a panel once, and my approach was: “We got to the moon, we basically developed the internet, and those people that did that, went to school and took languages and they took literature, and they took music and they took this...”

BEAUCHAMP: Medieval History? (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: And they took history courses, and philosophy courses, and they came up with this.

BEAUCHAMP: Clever stuff.

WOLAK: Now, we’ve gotten very science oriented, and our national scores in Math and Science...

BEAUCHAMP: -are down, down, down...

WOLAK: -are down, down, down. And I posited that you would find it to be a direct relationship, as they were less stimulated to really think and create....And, I got the engineers to agree with me. And the scientists. When we were doing plays not many English professors came to the plays; a few did. But Joe King, and-

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, engineers and scientists-

WOLAK: Engineers and scientists came all the time.

BEAUCHAMP: And the mathematicians.

WOLAK: Yep. But, not the Arts people, so it’s kind of an interesting situation.

WOLAK: What’s your next question?

BEAUCHAMP: Well...curriculum changes. Over time?

WOLAK: Sy and I were pretty content with the fact that we had an acting course, we had a directing course, we had a theatre crafts course, and then, we featured dramatic literature and theatre history. And, our students had a sort of a project: they all had to direct something. Take a play, analyse it, and
design for it. They had to come up with a basic notion, and they had to put the play on, and so they
directed each other and they acted for each other. And, increasingly, the dramatic and history
components were reduced and reduced and reduced, and more acting and more stagecraft, and scenic
design-costume design and these kinds of technical areas were what the students wanted, and that was
felt to be more practical, more applied...

BEAUCHAMP: Well, of course, but-

WOLAK: And so, as the faculties changed--Sy retired-other people came, and the curriculum changed.
They put in courses that were more technically oriented, toward skills. And they still have some
dramatic literature and they did put in, before I left, a scene analysis course which I helped develop; so
at least if they are not going to read a lot of plays, let them get a structure of how a drama works, and
what they can do to intellectually understand why they’re saying what they’re saying and what it means,
what is supposed to come out. And-right now, I’m not entirely sure what they are, but we did introduce
voice and movement classes and children’s theater classes, Sy had a readers theater class-That was
involved in narrative-literatures adapted for the stage, which I thought was fun. We used to teach oral
interpretation, but the speech department went away from that, so we no longer had students. What
we tried to do is introduce courses that students could take as electives: Play Writing, Modern Drama,
The Art of Comedy. Whatever kind of a specialty course we could come up with, and that sort of
worked. But, again, the University started to feel like you had to have at least 15 students per class-

BEAUCHAMP: Right-

WOLAK: -and it was hard to get 15 students really interested in studying...

BEAUCHAMP: Comedy?

WOLAK: Classic comedy, modern comedy...they wanted to get through it. And so, I think the curriculum
is still basically weighted toward skills.

BEAUCHAMP: Craft and skill?

WOLAK: Yeah. They have some theatre history and they have some dramatic literature, and they are
teaching structure, so they’re, you know...they’re trying to get their students what their students need.
And over the years, we had only a few students who jumped into Master’s Programs right away. That
was because I had a couple of students who were leaving UOP with $60-$65,000 in undergraduate
student debt.

BEAUCHAMP: And you could go to a Master’s Program and get more debt.

WOLAK: And get more debt. You know I think from the perspective that you and I shared...they had
more debt getting an undergraduate degree than we had been at getting graduate-

BEAUCHAMP: correct.
WOLAK: And yet, some of them go out for a couple of years, go back, get their graduate degrees, and for some...I think we did a pretty good job because in the 32 years I was there, we only had one student that did not get accepted in a Master’s program. And we had many who did; scores and scores of them that did, so they were somehow prepared. And you know, they went to- the bigger schools and competed very well. Which is my bias, you know? If they go to a graduate program, and they have to get through the graduate courses, it’s a certain intellectual component required: it’s not a talent thing. You know, understand dramatic instruction. It’s not talent, this is just intellectual work of application-you got to work for it. And so I do feel that the art students shouldn’t get so concerned about skills and craft. My own bias is you can learn whatever you want to learn about acting classes, and if you get out there and do it, ten years later, you’re an actor.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) Yes. Unless you’re just...you have magic genes...

WOLAK: Yeah-there are a few. And I always would use a sports analogy: How could this guy go from here to pro basketball...because he’s started to play basketball when he was seven.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. And he never stopped.

WOLAK: Never stopped. He got into the Peewee League and he got into this league, and he went to high school, and he went to summer camps, and community college, and the four year college, and now, he’s 19 years old, he’s been playing basketball for 12 years.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. For a majority of his life.

WOLAK: Right. And he’s pretty good at it, ok? I can understand that. I can really understand-with dedication and all of that stuff. We don’t have kids growing up anymore in too many theatrical families...where, from six or seven, they’re on the boards for entertaining or they get all of that stuff done, so that by the time they reach 17 and 18, they’ve got ten years of solid experience, and they’ve become overnight successes.

BEAUCAMP: The Marks Brothers.

WOLAK: Yeah. Overnight successes. (BEAUCHAMP LAUGHS)...Well, I went to school with Paul Michael Glazer-remember Starsky and Hutch?

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah...

WOLAK: He was Starsky. People talk about him as an overnight success, and I said: I acted with him 12 years ago. (BOTH LAUGH) Where did this overnight success come from? No, it really doesn’t happen. So, my approach to the training is not what they need now, but what will serve them best in the long run. And I think analytical skills, discipline, passion. You know, keep these alive, and it can take people through a lot of stuff.

BEAUCHAMP: Also takes them through graduate school.

WOLAK: Yeah.
BEAUCHAMP: Among other things.

WOLAK: Yeah, yeah. And so, the basic program is still good; it still works, and they’re getting what they need.

What else do you want to know?

BEAUCHAMP: You were Department Chair-

WOLAK: Yes-

BEAUCHAMP: -Three times: two normal times, one abnormal. So, who were you Department Chair under-who was the Dean?

WOLAK: Uh, Whiteker and Benedetti.

BEAUCHAMP: Ah, ok. How did that work?

WOLAK: Well, they were both very supportive of the program and what we were doing, but again, budget came in, and under Whiteker our “other” budget was cut twice. Fifteen percent each time. So, when this new batch of people came in, they were actually getting thirty percent fewer dollars than we had when we came in. They always ask how did you have the European trips; how did you have guest artists coming in; how did you hire pros to come work with at Fallon House? We had budget. We were making money, and we were allowed to keep the money. And then the budgeting pressures came in and multiplied, and so forth and so on, so...that’s-that’s when, you may recall, that’s when I instituted the dance program.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

WOLAK: We had a very nice dance program. We had a full time teacher, a half time teacher, and two part time teachers. I brought in Cathy Smith and Amanda Williams (I don’t know if you remember her)-

BEAUCHAMP: No.

WOLAK: ...Extraordinary dancer. Just extraordinary dancer. And, we had Bella Lowitzki, the great Bella Lowitzki come in and put on a piece on for our dance company, that we had here. We had as many as 60 or 70 dance majors. And, before we came over fully on the other side, where the engineering program now is housed-there was a big room, and we held dance classes.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, Anderson building. It was a nice wooden floor.

WOLAK: Yeah it was a nice wooden floor, and they were working out there, and a lot of people would walk to their classes and peak in. A lot of the male students slowed down,

BEAUCHAMP: (BOTH LAUGH) Yeah, a lot.
WOLAK: A lot. Looking at all these women, gyrating around the place. So that had to go. We got down to a dance teacher, and the company had to be dissolved and—and the formal dance concerts, which we had—yearly formal dance concerts— for several years.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah I remember—

WOLAK: —they were quite stunning. They were quite stunning. And we couldn’t sustain that, and that was budgetary pressure...Then every once in a while, they had come through when need was—when our lighting became so obsolete that they couldn’t work, and it was falling apart, and we got a modern lighting board and so forth and so on, and we got a couple of revisions to the Long Theatre...newer seats. And some, some other kinds of equipment. So...it’s obviously a struggle, but I don’t know if all of that is all that unique to theatre arts?

BEAUCHAMP: No, I think most of us were struggling one way or another.

WOLAK: Yeah, to get—

BEAUCHAMP: Psychologist’s budget was cut, about 40%, so similar issues.

WOLAK: Yeah, so it just meant you had to do something else.

BEAUCHAMP: Do things differently.

WOLAK: Yes. I think, as a result, fewer students are attracted, because the facilities are not really all that attractive and up to date, and the competition for quality students is pretty rugged out there. And, when they go to other campus’s...

BEAUCHAMP: To see what’s available?

WOLAK: To see what’s available, I believe that’s what forced the University to say one of our priorities is going to be a new student center. Because that’s where students go, and they go to other schools, and they see...

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, that there wasn’t anything at Pacific worth much.

WOLAK: Nothing. Nothing to compare, so...there was a recognition that...you got to put a face on the product.

BEAUCHAMP: That’s exactly what that was.

WOLAK: Yeah, and then was needed--there was no question about that. And equipment is needed, and in the technical areas, there’s...it’s like computers today. The equipment is obsolete the day it’s delivered. And yet, if you don’t have something, you’re totally lost, but when you get something...you know—

BEAUCHAMP: You are making do.
BEAUCHAMP: What part of being an administrator did you like, and which part about it did you not like, besides the budget?

WOLAK: Well, we had interminable meetings. Some of them I thought were necessary, and essential, but what really was difficult are the numbers of studies I had to help to gather data, and write up, and discover that when it was all done, it was not utilized-

BEAUCHAMP: At all.

WOLAK: At all. And they were constant. And, when we changed the Dean or Vice President, more studies-

BEAUCHAMP: More of the same thing-

WOLAK: More meetings, more discussions, more retreats.

BEAUCHAMP: More of the same.

WOLAK: More of the same. And, I guess it had to do some good, but I just didn’t sense it.

BEAUCHAMP: Not very visible, was it?

WOLAK: No, it really wasn’t. So, that was a difficulty. Then we got on this accountability kick, in which we were asked to provide clear evidence that what we were teaching was being effective.

BEAUCHAMP: From WASC

WOLAK: Yes. And we had to figure out...we had to show papers that the students could write. But were they writing any better than they were when they came in? Well, that depended on who the student was. (BEAUCHAMP LAUGHS) Because—you know, I was in that Pacific Seminar thing from the first day-

BEAUCHAMP: Right. So was I-

WOLAK: -and students came in here, they had all this writing stuff to do, and some of them were just dreadful. Some of them were quite good-

BEAUCHAMP: Quite good-

WOLAK: -but some of them were just awful. And you kept on correcting, you kept on talking. Presumably, they got better, but I don’t know where that assessment went.

BEAUCHAMP: How could you tell for sure, yeah...

WOLAK: And so that was...can they act better? I don’t know—in terms of the skill program, yes, we were able to show that when this kid came in, he couldn’t design a stage or she couldn’t design a costume. It looked like a stick figure with crayons on it. When they left, they were respectable looking conceptual renderings. And, so, you know...it was done, but, the standards seemed to be on results that could be tested with five-item multiple choices.
BEAUCHAMP: Because...?

WOLAK: Because they could quantify it.

BEAUCHAMP: It's easy...is it meaningful? That's not a question.

WOLAK: I know my friends in the Art Department were just...they didn’t know what to do. Someone came in and said, oh well, I don’t like that painting... (BEAUCHAMP LAUGHS) I guess we failed ...although I liked it...so it’s an ongoing difficulty.

BEAUCHAMP: It’s not as simple as WASC thinks it is.

WOLAK: No, it’s very difficult, and I reflected on that, and we sent some students to Regional Auditions, conducted nationally. I remember Janice Stevens; very gifted, very talented, very dedicated...she still is making a living in the theater. She’s over 50 years old, and ever since she graduated, she’s been making a living in the theatre. She’s not a great star, but she’s making a living, as a performer, which is quite an accomplishment. She went on these auditions and she came back with these results: 5 people, 3 thought she was wonderful, 2 suggested she take up accounting. (BEAUCHAMP LAUGHS) One of the places that rejected her; subsequently she went back to and re-auditioned, and got into that program-a year later, she was teaching their acting course. But two years earlier-

BEAUCHAMP: No.

WOLAK: And she wasn’t that different.

BEAUCHAMP: No-the student didn’t change. (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: No. So, I reflected on that, and I said, Ken, there’s your accountability. Who looks at what’s being done, what their context is, what their biases are, and they make a judgment, and if they have a certain position, that judgment speaks with thunder.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, yes, we’ve demonstrated this several times in psychology. Departments have spent a lot of time and effort in doing portfolio reviews and discovered there was no consistency amongst the judges.

WOLAK: And you see it in coaching. Player comes in, one coach says I don’t know what to do with it- and the player is on the bench; goes to some other team...fabulous. And you know, and it’s right: for this coach, this player just doesn’t fit. For that coach-I have a place for him. The player hasn’t changed, but the accountability-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, the context has

WOLAK: So, we wrestled with that. We had meetings on that and forms and file folders started on what freshman came and went, what their background was, resume updates to show when they graduated; here’s what they came in with, here’s what they left with...and I guess that satisfies the need for that.
BEAUCHAMP: You’ve talked about a number of people, but who were the folks, faculty, administrators, staff, students: who were the people who were most memorable to you, and why.

WOLAK: Sy Kahn was a good man, and quite gifted and very-very bright. Good poet, and...intellectual risk taker, which was very good- very good indeed. So we got along and he was...sometimes though, you know like all of us, he’s a little strange—but aren’t we all? (BEAUCHAMP CHUCKLES) Ah, Cliff Hand was interesting to me. On the one hand, very precise, very organized-

BEAUCHAMP: Organized...you sit here, you sit here, and you sit here- (CHUCKLES)

WOLAK: Yes that’s right, but what I got from Cliff was the fact that he was very student-centered. And he did feel that UOP should be a place where a student can go and feel, not only safe, but nurtured. And he wasn’t nambi-pambi, necessarily, but the door was supposed to be open, and I noticed that change,

Ken. By the time I left, more and more faculty doors were closed-

BEAUCHAMP: Closed or were not available or whatever-

WOLAK: Right. And more and more faculty were living in Manteca, Sacramento...

BEAUCHAMP: East Bay-

WOLAK: East Bay. And they had two office hours a week; they taught on Tuesday and Thursday, from morning to night so they could have four day weekends. And ok, I guess...that to me was the model I saw at the University of Georgia, which was that the major professor was available when the major professor was available, and if they had to have a late office hour, that was it. Nine o’clock in, ten o’clock, go home. If you were talking to that guy, as a student, he would lead you out of the door, so that when the last click happened, he closed it and left. And I see that happening here-I think it has to do with...some research pressure, as professors are asked to do more and more research-

BEAUCHAMP: Way more productive that way-

WOLAK: They are less and less involved with students. And perhaps that has something to do with Stockton. That some people feel that Stockton is an unsafe place-

BEAUCHAMP: I know that there are some people that feel that. I have trouble understanding it.

WOLAK: Yes. So maybe that’s why they chose to live on the outskirts and make part of the computer-I mean commuter-mess that’s going on; our highways are packed with people driving two or three hours to get to work. But, as a result, I find that students have accustomed themselves to the fact that...there isn’t that kind of involvement that I felt so clearly when I was here. I mean, when I first came, Hansen’s door was always open, and you would see him someplace with coffee, five or six kids around him and they were talking shop. I mean, they were talking about, you know, important stuff, and he was very funny, you know; very funny guy. And that was all over the place. We still have some people who are taking kids out to field trips; Fox is doing it, but that was the model when she came in: that was always done-always done. Neil Lark always did that. So, that-that is a model that I tried to follow-I was very
impressed with it. I had a sort of instinct about that, at Georgia and other places where that’s not the way it goes. But it was done that way here, and I just sensed that it was as much a part of the local ecology, as it were-WOLAK: I-maybe I’m wrong-

BEAUCHAMP: No, I had the same-same impression. Same feeling, same observation.

WOLAK: And I guess it just comes with the time. And then there’s a question of committee works. Oh jeez...I felt, when I was on the mentor seminar, that that was a constant committee job. You know, with the teaching and the meetings.

BEAUCHMAP: Meetings with the group of teachers doing the seminar-

WOLAK: Yes, that-that was a splendid model.

BEAUCHAMP: I thought it was fun.

WOLAK: It really was. It was not only fun, it was intellectually stimulating, and it was student-centered-

BEAUCHAMP: That’s why it was always interesting-

WOLAK: Yes. And so, I did a lot of that...for most of my years at UOP, that was above and beyond my normal teaching [requirement]. We used to do a lot of that-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes you did-

WOLAK: But I don’t know if that’s done that much anymore.

BEAUCHAMP: The Art Department and the Drama Department did a lot of that.

WOLAK: That was...it was-it was interesting. We did a lot of redesigning of courses because of the change in demographics in the department, in both the students and the faculty. I conducted searches and hired most of the faculty we have now, as a matter of fact. And then we had the committees on curriculum-some that failed, that I failed, I guess- I really was an advocate for the continuation of the Winter Term.  I lost that one. They did away with it-I thought that was too bad.

BEAUCHAMP: That was sad, yes.

WOLAK: Because it was a freewheeling thing, where you got together with a bunch of students and you could invent something new and not only was it student-centered, but it was self-motivated. This is not a class you have to take, this is a class you helped design, so work. And there were research projects in all of the departments-

BEAUCHAMP: Oh yes-

WOLAK: We put on new plays and we had people come in from Engineering and Pre-Med, and they hammered and sawed, and acted, and painted and tore tickets and put toilet paper in the johns and...in fact, Ken, two months ago, I went to see Julius Caesar in Monterey at a theater in Carmel, and there was
an actor there on stage named Steven Slack. Steven was a student of mine in ’78, in Pre-Med, and he did a couple of plays. I go there, I see Steven Slack still doing the plays—he’s still a physician-

BEAUCHAMP: He’s a physician and he’s in the plays.

WOLAK: -and he’s in the plays.

BEAUCHAMP: Ah, sweet. (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: That’s...that’s what I thought would be the best model for the kind of University we are. We have had some very fine theatre artists come out of the department. DeMarcus Brown, whom I’d just met, had stellar people. He had two academy award winners.

BEAUCHAMP: Really!

WOLAK: Barbara Baxley was there, Jo Van Fleet was there, Darrin McGavin He only did 600 movies-was there. And then you know we had- Dean Butler was there, from “Little House on the Prairie.” David Kelly at Berkeley Shakes and Ashland...very, very good people, there are several-San Francisco area actors who are out of our program, and I’ve seen them on several occasions...that’s ok for me. I don’t think a program, such as one at UOP, has to be aimed necessarily at making television movie stars.

BEAUCHAMP: Professional actors, right.

WOLAK: They can-they can do it. I mean, several are members of the union, they’re technically professionals. They got day jobs, as most people do. But, they are involved in it, and they’re doing what they want to do, what they feel they need to do, and they’re doing good work. But they also support arts. They...

BEAUCHAMP: They get it-

WOLAK: -They get it. They...and they’re intelligent, interesting people, and I think they vote for school propositions, you know. I think for most of them, Ken, the concept of greed is good is not what they live by. And I thought when we adopted at UOP, and I think this is one of Benedetti’s contributions...the focus on citizenship.

BEAUCHAMP: Citizens and leaders, yes.

WOLAK: This I think makes-

BEAUCHAMP: Makes a lot of sense-

WOLAK: It makes sense. Why else...why train leaders, if they aren’t focused on the fundamental requirements of good citizenship? That...I don’t...why should we focus on making millionaires? That’s-someone will do that on their own, by whatever means they can. But if-

BEAUCHAMP: Legal or illegal (CHUCKLES)
WOLAK: Right. But if they aren’t good citizens, I don’t give a damn how much money they’re making. They shouldn’t make any. In fact, one of our majors became a millionaire. Bob Bejan. I don’t know if you remember him, he was in most of our productions. He was on the water polo team.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh, yes.

WOLAK: Very energetic.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes-

WOLAK: Strong as an ox. I think he might have gotten 4 hours a night of sleep. Couldn’t get any more than that-

BEAUCHAMP: Because there wasn’t time.

WOLAK: There just wasn’t time. He was in the pool at 5:30 am; he was in the pool at 6:00 am. He was at rehearsal at 7:30-

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, at night. Late at night-

WOLAK: -and...nonstop, nonstop. He had time in his schedule, so he took FORTRAN and learned how to program. So he graduated from the-UOP, and he taught himself to tap dance, because he wanted to be a performer. And he auditioned—he’s a very lively guy, very bright guy, very lively, very-very pleasant. They cast him in this little review, and they asked him questions—because it was a musical revue—he said I can tap dance, of course! He hired three tap dancers for just that weekend, and then, nonstop, to teach him to tap-dance (BOTH LAUGH) so he could get through the first rehearsal; when he got through with the show, and he got better and better, the choreographer said, when you told me you could tap-dance, that wasn’t true was it?

BEAUCHAMP: Wasn’t true was it? (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: And he goes, nooo... he went on to play in “Chorus Line” in Broadway.

BEAUCHAMP: Really?

WOLAK: He took over the “Chorus Line” production that went to Paris. He learned how to tap-dance. It’s the kind of a guy he was. He also created the Ninja Turtle show, the live Ninja Turtle show that toured only 37 countries.

BEAUCHAMP: Oh, really?

WOLAK: The choreographer he hired was the choreographer that gave him that job... (BOTH LAUGH) and he hired him, and he was going to write this musical. And so he wrote the musical, and one of the lead singers didn’t show up, so he sang on the promo album, took it to Pizza Hut; they bought it. They said, we’re going to make a few copies, and he goes ok sure-here, can you use this? Oh yeah, how many you going to make? He says 700,000. So he wrote an album in two and a half weeks that went platinum. He took Fortran, he took Philosophy, he took Scene Analysis, he took Theatre History, he took American
History. He took a literature course, he took dance—he was here when we had the dance program—he was in every dance class. Every dance class. That to me, is the prime example of what a UOP student can get by being here. He didn’t have to be a math major, you know?

BEAUCHAMP: For opportunity.

WOLAK: He was a little slow on the FORTRAN, I forgot what teacher—one of the math teachers said come by and see me and made some time to catch him up. And they did it. That to me is what I felt UOP was when I came, and I think to some degree remains that way still. You still have the five schools in the same place...

BEAUCHAMP: You can mix them-

WOLAK: So you can mix them, and get along. I know when our department was in trouble- Benedetti wanted to close it, because it-

BEAUCHAMP: Was getting too small.

WOLAK:—was getting too small. I went out to advise, which I have urged my colleagues over the years to do, but they’re not going to do it. At the back of every program, I put the name of everyone who was involved in the show, in any capacity. And I listed their major.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, I remember that.

WOLAK: And it was interesting. People would turn around, Pre-Med, Pre-Pharm—

BEAUCHAMP: Psychology—

WOLAK:—Psychology, Engineering. See a lot of...students studying for the ministry, and there they were! And then I went to the Board, because Benedetti had a couple of people talking about this, and I said what other department cuts across the line? In which an Engineering student can get together with a Comparative Religions student, and they can mix and get their passion organized for a project—

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, and make something happen—

WOLAK: Make something really happen together. Not from just the arts people, but from anybody... Steven Slack, a Pre-Med. who did theatre too, otherwise he said he’d go crazy. And I’ve had several people come in and say a couple of people in the psych class who were in their clinical program, they just...needed to get a little space, and just do this stuff, and take a breath, go back to do that. So—the concept of UOP that I liked so much was that this was a place open to that kind of de-compartmentalization. And I still felt that there were too many walls going up.

BEAUCHAMP: Over time, yes.

WOLAK: There was even some stuff about doing away with minors. But no, and I was on this committee for the work schedule...the work load. We’ve never resolved that one too well either. I did a lot of committees. I didn’t do as much as some, but I was on the GE committee, and several...I did some
tenure evaluations for people in Education, and Communication. Phys. Ed even. I was on the Student Activity-Student Faculty Advocate Board...that was a bothersome place...

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

WOLAK: Because there were problems that were difficult to resolve because there was a reluctance to get a lot of sunshine in. Let’s do stuff in shadows, and I don’t know if that’s very helpful. That’s very unhelpful. Do they still have a Courses and Standards Committee?

BEAUCHAMP: I think so. I’m not sure, but I think so, because I’ve been out for...well-

WOLAK: Yeah. As much as me.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, so I’m not sure.

WOLAK: And then there’s this human heritage panels. I got in trouble because I was on the panel to review the communications department, and they had some real big problems. So I said that and I was hated for that-

BEAUCHAMP: Too much sunshine (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: Well, they weren’t talking to each other.

BEAUCHAMP: No.

WOLAK: And so I sent someone a report—that the department is in a little bit of trouble because you’ve got humanists, and you’ve got scientists. You’ve got people who work on physical problems, and people who work on rhetoric. They don’t talk the same language-

BEAUCHAMP: They don’t have anything to talk about. (LAUGHS)

WOLAK: They don’t even like each other. And I think the only outcome of that is they moved speech therapy and Audiology, out of the Communication department. But for a while, I was persona non grata because of that. That’s when I was working on Carol Hall’s tenure committee. In close order, I worked on her tenure, and on Allen Ray’s. And that’s where this—a lot of stuff...

BEAUCHAMP: Was revealed.

WOLAK: -was, was revealed. And it was very difficult.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes it was.

WOLAK: I’ve worked on Strategic Planning. I think some good came out of Strategic Planning. That’s when we went off on the retreats and everybody put their hair down—and people vented a little bit there, about the need for facilities and...the one recommendation that didn’t get anywhere, you might recall, was a suggestion that we were getting a little top-heavy in administration.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) that’s the first suggestion that goes in the garbage bucket-
WOLAK: That’s what—just got thrown out. Because I recall, after...when you were temporary dean, I think you had a secretary...

BEAUCHAMP: We had Jackie and on temporary duty, we had a person, who was converting the files to Library of Congress, but she was in there just for that job, and she left. And then, when Doug Smith started doing a lot of stuff with students, then we got our secretary for him too.

WOLAK: Yeah—we had just as many departments then as we do now.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. When Binkley was Dean, there was Jackie and Binkley. That was it.

WOLAK: That’s it.

BEAUCHAMP: That was the entire operation.

WOLAK: And by the time I left, there was a Dean, an Associate Dean, and an Assistant Dean: every one of them had secretaries, and at least two or three part timers, in the-

BEAUCHAMP: With different titles. Directors and such.

WOLAK: Yeah. There was this army.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) and now, if you look at the Provost Office, that is real growth.

WOLAK: Yeah. So, from my perspective, that put a distance between my ability as a chairman to get to the Dean, and have a one-on-one talk, there were appointments, there were delays, there were talk to this associate, talk to this-

BEAUCHAMP: Chain of command-

WOLAK: -Chain of Command and the corporate model just came down. People used to tell me Bob Burns would walk around that campus.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

WOLAK: And I remember when I first came, we had the pastry shop. And you met colleagues and students there, and they had damn good stuff too.

BEAUCHAMP: the academic vice president was there too.

WOLAK: Yeah. And that kind of personalization, I guess, became difficult to manage, but the University didn’t grow that much. We still don’t have 10,000 students on campus. Very small student body and the administrator count has burgeoned. And so, I know that I felt somewhat alienated. I know students do. I guess that is from following this corporate model, and I don’t know that the corporate model is the best model to follow-

BEAUCHAMP: No. Not for an academic institution.
WOLAK: Where did I get into trouble? When I reviewed the English department. Why did I get into trouble? Well, because the English professors told me that they had felt alienated. Isolated. And that was the result of even their geography. They were in this office, they were in that office, they were in another building. And that was the whole thing about Arts and Sciences. They were all over campus. So I made a recommendation to our-then we had a Provost - and he was not at all receptive to it. And I felt that was a sad thing that the biology people were in their place...and the pharmacy people-

BEAUCHAMP: Were here-

WOLAK: Were in their place...the Arts and Social Science people in the College of the Pacific, were all over the place. Two years later, when I was no longer chair, they built an addition on the building, and guess where the entire faculty for Arts and Social Sciences end up? In that building. So I was just confused as to why it was such a stupid idea.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) Yeah, I’ll bet.

WOLAK: Then it got better over here and this fostering of a sense of community-This is not Berkeley, I mean, it’s not that kind of a place. So, but that’s something else. That’s something else. I was on a couple of education committees that redesigned the multi-subject credential...to get arts components into that. So I mean, I did not do constant committee work. Part of the reason being...I did a lot of directing then, at UOP. I did a lot of it, and that meant, day’s over, I go back, and I’m there till 11 o’clock.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, because you have a group of students that were waiting for you.

WOLAK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. See, I must have directed 50 plays.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah. Over the years, sure. That doesn’t surprise me at all.

WOLAK: So, I did not make myself available for a lot of committee work. And I did always teach a full load. Although we were supposed to get off for directing productions, but then-that-

BEAUCHAMP: No, didn’t happen –

WOLAK: That didn’t happen. That just didn’t happen.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, that was, OK, you chose this profession.

WOLAK: Yep.

BEAUCHAMP: Live with it, baby.

WOLAK: That’s right, that’s right. And we do, it’s ok. It’s ok.

BEAUCHAMP: Did Pacific meet your expectations? That’s a good question. And you came from Georgia.

WOLAK: Look, I’ll tell you. It exceeded my expectations when I came. It was a vital place-

BEAUCHAMP: It was alive, yeah-
WOLAK: I was impressed with those people I named earlier, and others, you know. I saw Gill Dillinger’s work, he’s brilliant!

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah-he is work, work, work-

WOLAK: Absolutely brilliant and it was fine. Then, as time progressed, and I think it was budgetary pressures, the place got more corporate, it got more organized; it got more de-personalized, and I don’t know if whether this is the place, but we had a couple of administrators who got themselves into difficulty. We had a president that just wasn’t working, and some of us-you were there too-participated in a little walk out. I think it was the frustration that I was- I remember that when I came, I started to...

BEAUCHAMP: We had nothing, exactly.

WOLAK: None of it. And then I started to feel it until...you just...you didn’t know what to do, you didn’t want to abandon the place or the students, but it was just difficult.

BEAUCHAMP: It wasn’t working right.

WOLAK: It was just very difficult. Perhaps it’s all budgetary pressure,

BEAUCHAMP: Well...there were also wrong people in a given job too.

WOLAK: Well...I guess the institution of the Provost made sense, but that was just another bureaucratic regime.

BEAUCHAMP: Yep. Separated you further and further from the President.

WOLAK: Yes. And so now-I guess our president now is like the president in other, very big schools. It’s raising money...

BEAUCHAMP: Period.

WOLAK: And it’s needed, boy, its needed. Well-when I first came; I did discover...Stockton’s grown enormously, as you know...UOP was quite insular. And it wasn’t until after...I guess strongly before McCaffrey retired that there were conscious moves to connect UOP somehow to the community-

BEAUCHAMP: Surrounding community, yes-

WOLAK: And that’s when I think-again, Benedetti came in with the public service requirement- you have to go out there and...

BEAUCHAMP: Do something.

WOLAK: Do something. Yeah...I don't know what could be done about that, but I think it’s essential. I think it’s essential-I know one thing that would help. Years ago- I did some part time work at Hartnell College in Salinas-they got into a similar situation with the community saying what good are you. So, the business manager at that theater, one year, went out to the bank and arranged to pay everybody in
silver dollars. And he was a member of the Rotary too. And so, they were spending money, and this came up in the Rotary about closer town & gown, and he asked—**How many of you have received a lot of silver dollars in your cash registers?** He goes—guess where they’re coming from. Where? Coming from our program. Paying all of our people in silver dollars. You see them all around this town. Imagine that they are not there. Imagine that our faculty isn’t here. Oh...UOP should do something like that.

**BEAUCHAMP:** Yes.

**WOLAK:** Yeah. Just for the economic impact, and it would help. There are a lot of good things happening at UOP; they have trouble getting them covered and disseminated. The internet is helping. But with the decline in the newspaper, it’s difficult for our, our local public to appreciate, you know. UOP, who cares? Well...next to the County Government, it’s probably the biggest employer-

**BEAUCHAMP:** yes.

**WOLAK:** -in this whole town. So, I am- I am still sort of concerned about that. I think UOP should have a very good town and gown relationship. it’s a two edged sword. When I was chair, I had called some people saying, Alright, I want to use your theatre next Wednesday, for a community group. I said, but we’re in rehearsal. Listen-I pay taxes...

**BEAUCHAMP:** (CHUCKLES) That’s wonderful.

**WOLAK:** Yeah. That’s what-I told them, but you know this is a private institution. You don’t pay anything for me, right? Or this building. I said, go over to Delta.

**BEAUCHAMP:** Yeah. (CHUCKLES)

**WOLAK:** Your tax dollars are supporting Delta, and I told this person, and they aren’t going to be very helpful either.

**BEAUCHAMP:** Yeah (LAUGHS).

**WOLAK:** Because their facilities are for their students, where they can interact with the community, but it’s not your right to say, oh you cancel your show...

**BEAUCHAMP:** Yeah...so we can have our meeting.

**WOLAK:** So we can have our meeting. Or, we have a little playlet that we want to put on for, you know, Filipino Independence, or whatever it is...doesn’t work that way. So, that-that’s the lesson that-how do you get involved with the community, and yet, get the community to understand that there’s another purpose for this place here, that in the way you might wander in one day and say that room is empty, but it’s not always that simple. It’s just not yours to control. Well then, I hate you. I don’t know how to-how to resolve that. Nor how they get people in for the various concerts, and lectures, and symposiums that are going on that are free. It’s just hard, but it’s there. It’s very there. Has it improved? In some respects, I think it has. I think there’s a greater recognition of the University. Is the place well liked?
Frankly, it took a hit when football was canceled. Even though the football program was not that heavily supported-

BEAUCHAMP: By the local community-

WOLAK: -by the local community-

BEAUCHAMP: No-it wasn’t-

WOLAK: It’s just that they had a chance to say; oh I was playing in Stockton, or something. Well, but for 38,000 people in the stands?

BEAUCHAMP: No.

WOLAK: In the stands, but that’s-

BEAUCHAMP: More like 3800-

WOLAK: But, I went to see the UOP production of Julius Caesar, theater was filled. That pleased me. I don’t know, because I’m not directly involved anymore, as to what the current situation is, or what it’s prognosis is…I should think its pretty good. We were-UOP was certainly helped by tuition raises at the California Schools-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes it was (LAUGHS). Contrast is not quite so great.

WOLAK: No-no, not-not…and you-you can still get out of UOP if you keep your nose clean, in four years.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. All you have to do is pay attention to business, yes.

WOLAK: Tough to do that in any State school.

BEAUCHAMP: We have kids graduating in 3 years at Pacific.

WOLAK: Tough to do that in state schools.

BEAUCHAMP: Probably impossible.

WOLAK: Just-they aren’t there. There aren’t enough classrooms, there isn’t enough time.

BEAUCHAMP: Right-and space...

WOLAK: They ain’t got no space, and so that is an advantage. Uh, so it’s been a pretty good ride. It’s you know, rough bumps and a lot of trauma here and there, and everywhere…but, it was a good 32 years.

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah.

WOLAK: I guess they were happy to get rid of me, but that...

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) that is to be expected.
WOLAK: That’s to be expected...that’s to be expected. Any major disappointments? I had one, in the treatment of Peter Lash; he was our department chair, and got some nasty accusations thrown at him and the University was not supportive, at all. And it should have been, but... the advocacy of the UOP staff, especially its faculty, is I think, not very strong. The administration immediately backs off, no matter how...now, there are-there are difficulties, perhaps in some people, but I don’t know if we have to go into that here or not, but...I was disappointed in that.

BEAUCHAMP: I was his advocate as you may or may not know-

WOLAK: Yeah. It-it was ridiculous.

BEAUCHAMP: I know that.

WOLAK: So, that disappointed me, and I felt quite alienated from the administration as a result of that. But, that doesn’t deny the value of everything else. I had...a couple of daughters graduate from UOP. That tuition break helped...

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) yes. I had a couple of children graduate also.

WOLAK: Yep. Yeah-and they had pretty good experiences here. I have to assume that the faculty remains strong, although I had a philosophic approach that I’m not sure-that I got across to administration. I think that the heart and soul of a University is its faculty, not its student body. They come--and they go. But with a cohesive core of faculty, they can not only attract students, but they can make up for a lot of deficiencies.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes. And did.

WOLAK: And did, yes. Continually. I sensed that the perception of the administration was that the University is composed of Administrators, in priority order, Administrators, Students, Staff, and Faculty. And I don’t think that’s appropriate. I don’t think that’s workable--I think that you have to have to make a commitment to the fact that...give your faculty space. Give them creative room, give them resources-

BEAUCHAMP: Give them as much as you can.

WOLAK: Yes...but, let them work. I know it may sound like...the protection of tenure is crucial. And the ability to profess is absolutely crucial. Even though it may annoy-

BEAUCHAMP: Annoy somebody-

WOLAK: -somebody. In my area, putting on plays that might offend somebody-

BEAUCHAMP: Yes-

WOLAK: -is essential.

BEAUCHAMP: Absolutely.
WOLAK: I know we put on “The Killing of Sister George” and there is homosexuality in that play. Ok fine, I mean that’s—that’s what it takes. The way I put on “Bright Room Called Day” about the rise of Nazism in Germany, and...oh, why re-hash all that stuff, you know...

BEAUCHAMP: Because we hope we learn something from history (BOTH LAUGH). We believe that it’s possible...

WOLAK: The right to paint stuff that may look strange and offensive to some and to perform weird music. Not just Mozart, but strange stuff. Progressive jazz, even. That’s what we’re supposed to do. And you know, take on topics in your own field. The recent changes in the identifications of mental illness-

BEAUCHAMP: Oh yes-

WOLAK: Quite controversial-

BEAUCHAMP: Yeah, the one that’s up right now, is very controversial, yes-

WOLAK: -that should be trumpeted. There should be symposia on that-

BEAUCHAMP: What that’s all about-

WOLAK: What’s that all about and what that means relative to how we view ourselves. Relative to who’s in and who’s out, and what could be done-

BEAUCHAMP: Right-

WOLAK: ...yeah, some people get pissed off, but that’s—that’s ok. It’s ok. It’s ok to teach the Quran, in what’s left of this school. That’s-

BEAUCHAMP: It’s ok to hire a Larry Meredith in to the religious studies department-

WOLAK: That’s right. You’re going to get-

BEAUCHAMP: You’re going to get controversy-

WOLAK: You’re going to get some-some shaking of the ground, and that is supposed to happen. And I was fully convinced when I came here, that this is what this place was. There were risk takers, they were supported...

BEAUCHAMP: Was the Burn’s Legacy.

WOLAK: ...in this, and faculty were hired, not because they were cookie cutter, but because they had a certain outlook. Ken Albala, into food...what kind of a history professor is this?

BEAUCHAMP: Isn’t that great?

WOLAK: A good kind.
BEAUCHAMP: (Laughs) Yeah...I think it’s marvelous.

WOLAK: Yeah, you know...get that out there and...my observation is that UOP has gone a little-a little...has gone too conservative.

BEAUCHAMP: Gone conservative, yes. That is the word that I would choose.

WOLAK: And...intellectual liberality is I think essential. Got to have some ideas out there...If you’re not upsetting somebody, you’re not doing the job (CHUCKLES). I remember, in Mentor Seminar-gal came in-nice gal, very well spoken, wrote technically beautifully, metaphorically, very nice writer-she believed that males had one less rib than females.

BEAUCHAMP: Well yeah, of course! (LAUGHS) What’s the problem?

WOLAK: And she was challenged on that-not only by me, but by other students. She left. I think that’s ok. I don’t think it’s the job of this University to say, well if you believe that males have one fewer rib than-we’ll support you in that-

BEAUCHAMP: No-

WOLAK: -in that belief. We can’t-we can’t support you-in that belief.

BEAUCHAMP: (CHUCKLES) it’s like counting the teeth in a horse’s mouth...we’ve got to do it...

WOLAK: Yeah...and there were some repercussions from that. Drove a merit scholar student away...well, it’s her decision to move, but...all that we had to do, in that course, is just keep on applying the contrary arguments, and when it came down to religion versus science, in the matter of Biology-

BEAUCHAMP: Right. If it’s a scientific question- (CHUCKLES)

WOLAK: We just have to push the truth. I hope UOP will stay there-

BEAUCHAMP: -Will continue to do that-

WOLAK:--Yeah! And say, if something comes down the pipe, and-and it’s very... controversial with a sector of the economy, intellectually do it. We did a play at Salinas in which we had to-we had to change a reference in the play, because it referenced growers who had...who were forced, to keep the workers from being organized. The playwright chose a name, by random-because I know the playwright-and he happened to choose a name of a Salinas area grower family.

BEAUCHAMP: (LAUGHS) Oh god.

WOLAK: Major contributors to the college, so that reference was changed. Ok-

BEAUCHAMP: Oh, that’s ok-

WOLAK: That’s ok-
BEAUCHAMP: It was a random choice in the first place.

WOLAK: Yeah, that was a random choice in the first place. But...if you’re a University, and you’re instructing in these various areas, you are going to-your influence is going to be felt, and I hope that the administration will support the faculty in these important intellectual areas. Yeah so that these-these professors who have replaced, have the same right to profess-

BEAUCHAMP: That we had-

WOLAK: -that we had, yes. I think it’s crucial. And that’s...I don’t think it can be violated...What else? Have you covered it?

BEAUCHAMP: I think we’ve done it.

WOLAK: Ok. Bless you, sir-

BEAUCHAMP: Bless you.