Brown, Ashland Oral History Interview

Robert Benedetti

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Ashland O. Brown (1991-2016)
Dean of School of Engineering
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

July 6, 2016

By Robert Benedetti

Transcription by Jade Vo, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Changes and growth in scope of the academic programs, advancements in student scholarship (use of finite element analysis), challenges that the university could help the Stockton Community improve in (K-12), and challenges that the University could achieve in the future (advancement, research, Stockton K-12).
Benedetti: My name is Robert Benedetti and I am the interviewer for Ashland Brown, the former dean and professor in the school of engineering. Today’s date is July 6th, and the interview is being conducted in the Atherton library. I will continue by asking Ash some questions and we’ll proceed for probably an hour. Ash, what years did you serve at the University and what were your titles?

Brown: Sure. I served at the University from 1991 to June of 2016. My titles were Dean of Engineering and Professor of Mechanical Engineering.

Benedetti: Why did you come to Pacific? Describe the process for you to get here.

Brown: I was a dean at an engineering technology school in South Carolina. I had been there for about 3 years. But my family was not very happy with South Carolina for whatever reasons, and so my wife wanted to come out west and California was the place that we wanted to go. My brother was from out here and he lived out here, so the opening at the University for the dean of engineering seemed appropriate. That’s what started me to come out to the University of the Pacific.

Benedetti: When you first came here, what were your impressions of Stockton and the city?

Brown: I have a very positive impression of the city. Stockton was a small town and I grew up in a small town in Texas. I acclimated to the small town and the people were friendly, warm. The University was a very warm place. I met some very marvelous people, including Bob was here and another gentleman who was a very important in me coming here was Joseph Subbiondo, and the president Bill Atchley – he was a warm and friendly gentleman. There were a number of people I felt comfortable with – that’s why I came.

Benedetti: You didn’t mention the physical appearance of the place. What did you think of the campus when you first saw it?

Brown: It kind of reminded me of a small private school back in the east coast. The architecture was very Ivy in nature and I went to school and graduate school on the east coast. It had that appearance. For a California, US institution, it was not a typical California institution (laughs).

Benedetti: Very true, very true. Now you’ve been here for a long time both as dean and as a faculty member. Can you describe some of the major changes in the curriculum that you’ve lived through here?

Brown: Well a lot. One of the major changes I’ve seen in the 25 years I’ve been at the institution is that the curriculum has evolved and has changed and become much broader. We are including a number of courses in areas that we didn’t include back in the ‘90s when I came here. It was a very broad curriculum that evolved. I saw that not only in engineering, but in my colleagues’ school, the College of the Pacific. Those are the things that have changed dramatically in the 25 years I’ve been associated with this institution.
Benedetti: Is there any course or innovative program that you were particularly involved in creating while you were here?

Brown: Well, one area that I was involved in was creating the instruction in finite element analysis. A colleague of mine started teaching finite elements before I was here, and I took that to the next level and I was very successful in getting a number of national science foundation grants to make sure it covered the instruction for the whole school of engineering and computer science. That has been one area that I’ve been very strong in supporting - making sure engineers have this advanced engineering analysis, called finite element analysis, in the curriculum. It’s normally not taught to undergraduates. Engineers. It’s normally taught to graduate engineering students.

Benedetti: Let me turn for a few minutes to your administrative experience. In your administrative capacity, who did you report to and who reported to you?

Brown: I reported to Joseph Subbiondo, who was the academic executive vice president. Joe Subbiondo was a very, very warm and congenial gentleman, very bright, very knowledgeable. I had department chairs reporting to me as the dean. I had about 4 department chairs that reported to me.

Benedetti: How would you describe your administrative philosophy and style?

Brown: I got some comments that I brought with me to kind of reflect on it. My style was very congenial with a strong leadership, with delegation and responsibility. I felt that people had to be responsible for their particular departments. They had to keep their departments whole, develop very strong procedures to expand their curriculum. One of the things that I was instrumental in bringing to the institution was an industrial advisory council. Because I had spent 25 years prior to Pacific working in corporate America, and so I felt that engineers needed to be aware of how corporate America took their skill sets and worked them in as professionals. I believe that the department chairs had to have an advisory council made up of corporation managers and alum who gave them feedback on what our students needed to have to be successful in corporate America. That was one of things that I encouraged when I came here – was the formation of this council - and I delegated that to all the department chairs. Also I believe that they should have their own budgets, so I delegated that each department had their own fiscal budgets that they managed and as a dean, I looked over their shoulders so to speak to see that it was run properly for the whole school.

Benedetti: Can we move a little beyond just the school? How did you develop the relationship between the school of engineering and the University as a whole?

Brown: Well one of those was working with you and working in the College of the Pacific to broaden the contact of the faculty with teaching the general education courses. I led the way by teaching it myself. I felt that engineers played a very important part to bringing technology to the general education curriculum because of their knowledge of the technical nature. One of the things that I felt was that because it’s a small campus, a small school so to speak, we can integrate the faculty into the College of the Pacific and teaching and general education, giving the general education students a more technical knowledge of how technical our society has become.
Benedetti: When you were in that capacity, what kinds of things did you do to make yourself accessible to students, faculty, and people from other schools? How did you try to make sure that people could get to you with their comments?

Brown: One of the things that I always did was have an open door. I believed in keeping an open door as a dean and therefore opening it to all students, all faculty, any time I was available to be there to assist them and help them if I could. Any issues or problems that came up – and there were a lot. One of the things that I became very involved with pretty quickly coming to Pacific was accreditation. That always comes up in technical fields and in engineering we have an ABET, which is our accreditation body that accredits all engineering programs. We had our accreditation visit with them the year or two of my coming to the campus. I had a leg up in the sense that I had gone through that process at South Carolina State. Thank God I had seen what ABET was all about because corporate America is really unknowledgeable on the academic accreditation. I had to learn it from the ground up. The easiest way for me to learn what accreditation was by becoming an evaluator myself. I later became an evaluator for WASC. WASC is the western association of accreditation for academic higher education, so I worked with the accreditation body for the western association.

Benedetti: As you were an administrator, what were the activities that you thought were the most and the least productive. What are the things you thought, “by gosh they worked,” and what were the things that you had to do, but just didn’t think they worked very much.

Brown: Well, some of the things that I think worked good, and we had to improve upon it, was the teaching of ethics. Ethics was kind of a cold and hot phenomenon at our engineering program. I worked with some of the faculty to make it more applicable to the students and engineering in that they understood that they had an ethic factor in becoming an engineer. We live in a society where mortality/ethics is important – even though some of our politicians don’t view it that way. I give the analysis that if you drive over a bridge, you don’t want to know “well it may stand up or it may not.” You’d like to say it will stand up and it will take the weight of my car and my truck or whatever. It’s a positive thing. Our society is such that people don’t realize that somebody has to say, “Well I’m putting my name on that drawing that that will stand up.” So I worked with department chairs and Gary Martin to make sure that ethics was an important root knowledge that all of the school of engineering students would have to pass. We worked with our colleague Bob to make sure it worked in the College of the Pacific. Ethics was a challenge. There were many faculty members who didn’t see the need for it. But as a practicing manager and professional engineer, I saw the need for it. I worked in many industries where you had to do things correctly or people would lose their lives, or corporations would face multimillion dollar law suits for negligence.

Benedetti: When you were making decisions and working with people on projects, how did you find the University governance system? The other offices you had to work with and the faculty senate and all the faculty committees that were out there. Was it easy to navigate when you were doing things or were there some problems? Always challenges.
Brown: There were always challenges. The thing that always shocked me was that I came from big organizations – these were fortune 100 companies, they were monstrous organizations. Ford Motor Company, General Motor, large bureaucracy was a way of life for them. But for a small, liberal arts university, with only 4,000 students, I was shocked to see that bureaucracy was king here also (laughs).

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: For a small liberal arts school, what shocked me the most was the registration process was so disjointed. That was a headache. I go back to my days that – I went to a big public undergraduate engineering school called Purdue and Purdue had 30,000 students. I remember vividly as an undergraduate at Purdue, they sent me my schedule of classes while I was still in Texas. They put down the classroom, the time of day, what was required for the class – everything was mapped out even before I stepped foot on the campus. This was not the case at Pacific in the 1990s.

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: There were cases where students were waiting in line to pay their college fees and not knowing what classes they should be signing up for. And I said, “This is absurd.” I remember a conversation I had with one of my colleagues Dave Fletcher. Dave and I went around that issue a number of times. I said, “David, how can we be such a small engineering school and be so unorganized in terms of telling our students what classes are offered, when, and where?” He said, “Well Ash, that’s our history for Pacific”

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: Now that I’m retired, I see the same problems. I’m getting emails now in retirement of some of my advisees that are still making class registration errors. So, that legacy is still with us at Pacific and hopefully it will be, eventually, resolved. For a small, private university, it’s amazing how complicated 4,000 students can be versus 30,000, where I went to undergraduate (laughs).

Benedetti: Let me ask you - let me move to a different topic, maybe a more positive one – who were the individuals during the time that you were at Pacific, both as an administrator and as a faculty member, that you found most memorable and why?

Brown: Well, most memorable was – you were one of them Bob because I could always know what you had on your mind and what your agenda was. Another one that I had was my associate dean Bob Hamernik. Bob Hamernik was always giving me the straight shot. I am always indebted to Bob for that. He never was wishy-washy. He would give me a straight answer and said, “Ash we got to do X, Y, and Z and we got to do it in this timeline.” I really took notice of people like you who said, “We had had to have general education and must do X, Y, and Z and make that happen.” Bob was the same thing in engineering. He said, “We got to meet ABET criteria and we gone have to do A, B, and C to get accredited.” He and I made sure that we did that. We got accredited. We had no problems getting re-accredited in 1994. I will never forget our experience with you with the engineering physics program. That was an experience in itself. We had an accreditation team on campus and you had physics and we had engineering physics. But the team went and visited your campus and they didn’t have proper
physics laboratory equipment available for the students’ instruction. Bob, you, and I had to go see
President Bill Atchley and tell him in so many uncertain words that if we did not get the right physics
equipment, we would not have that program reaccredited. But I give Bill credit. He stepped up to the
plate and said, “Bob, you and Ash, you’re going to get the laboratory equipment. We’re going to pay for
the half a million or whatever it costs to get your equipment so that Ash’s engineering physics program
gets reaccredited. And that was fantastic! So that was a positive experience that came out of a negative
and I will never forget that (laughs).

Benedetti: Yeah, they thought our physics laboratory equipment belonged in a museum (laughs).

Brown: The accreditation team said, “You can tell the difference between accredited programs and non-
accredited programs by the equipment that’s available. Even to this day, if I walk into a classroom at
Pacific, I can tell if the program’s accredited or non-accredited by the age of the equipment and the
caliber of the equipment.

Benedetti: When somebody outsides telling you, “You got to get up to that standard…”

Brown: That’s exactly it. And if nobody is telling, the standard won’t ever happen.

Benedetti: It slips.

Brown: It slips. I like the term we used then. “We have a first world country in instruction equipment
and there’s a third world country in instruction equipment.” (laughs)

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: The accrediting body was very clear about that when they came back to us and reported. They
said, “There are things you got to fix and replacing outdated instruction laboratory equipment is a must
do.”

Benedetti: During the time you were here, do you think students have shifted? Good, bad, different,
broad…?

Brown: Yes, yes. Well, the students that I came here under - they were very naïve, in some respects.
Today’s students are extremely aggressive in terms of cheating.

Benedetti: Oh yes, yes.

Brown: They were not aggressive in cheating in the ‘90s when I came to this campus. We didn’t have to
worry about laptops and cellphones and cameras and all that kind of stuff. Today, leaving as a professor,
I had to rewrite my syllabi to include the updated technology to foil the student cheaters that were out
there every semester.

Benedetti: Interesting.

Brown: I mean the students got extremely aggressive at cheating, and the faculty has to be equally
aggressive in stopping them (laughs).
Benedetti: Right, you got to step up to them.

Brown: You got to step up. In ‘91 there was none of that.

Benedetti: No, that’s very interesting. I found the same thing.

Brown: The world we live in today where cheating as a way of life and also corporations have changed their modus of operandi. When we came in the early ‘90s, corporations never tested the engineers before hiring. Today, most corporations, I’d say 90% test them to verify their engineering knowledge.

Benedetti: Interesting.

Brown: Because they don’t trust the degree that they are graduating with. That’s just the difference in the era.

Benedetti: What about faculty? Over the time that the faculty that you dealt with, mostly I supposed, in the school of engineering, did you see any changes or differences?

Brown: Oh yes, oh yes. Well, when I came here we had teaching faculty. They were teachers by and large. But over the era, the administration has pushed them to be research journals and papers and funded research. Some of them have resisted that push. But the faculty has been pushed into, “You got to have publications before we will grant you tenure.” So I’ve seen in my course, in the 25 years, how faculties have been denied tenure for lack of publications. They have had to readdress because the faculty in the ‘90s didn’t have all that number of publications and there were not many that even attempted to go to the major organizations for funding. That was one of the first things I did, was raise monies from our donors, the few donors that we had, and put together seed money for faculty to conduct research in engineering education. We were successful. We raised some money. I raised a few hundred thousand dollars and was able to grant a little over $2,000, $3,000 grants to my engineering faculty whom were successful in using that little money for seed money. Now, that has morphed now to administration has taken that over. It doesn’t happen in the school of engineering any longer.

Benedetti: It’s from the central administration.

Brown: The central administration has currently taken that role on. They provide $2,000 or $2,500 grants to faculty. But when I came here, I did that, myself as the dean.

Benedetti: Let me ask you one other question about faculty. Did you see any changes in the way their gender, race, or ethnicity is treated at the university?

Brown: Well, very little in some respects and very much in others. When I started here, we had no female engineering faculty to speak of. We had one, Louise Stark. Now we have six female faculty members. But we have no African American engineering faculty. I will be the last - first and last. We have no African American engineering faculty in the school of engineering. It doesn’t appear that they’ll replace me (laughs).
Benedetti: What about taking the administrators that you’ve worked under, both as a fellow administrator and as a faculty member, do you see any differences in administrations or administers over that period from the ‘90s to now?

Brown: Yes, I do. I see some difference in administrations. But one flaw that I see even to this day is the serious contention of fundraising. When I came as a dean, I had to come up with my own, so to speak, support group to help me raise funds. The current dean is dealing with the same thing, but he’s getting some support from the central administration. But I don’t see the emphasis on fundraising that I think a private school should have.

Benedetti: That’s something that’s been left behind.

Brown: It’s very left behind. And I see the difference in a sister institution and looking at them grow and us grow. And that sister institution is University is the Southern California.

Benedetti: Yeah.

Brown: They were in the same situation in ’91, but they’re not that way in 2016 (laughs).

Benedetti: Let me ask you about staff – all the little people. Have you seen any shifts or changes in them? How do you feel about them?

Brown: Well, I feel that they’ve become extremely sensitive and feel all awkward now because of the open door of people coming and going.

Benedetti: I see. So that they are afraid maybe they’ll be like...

Brown: Oh, very much so. I think in the ‘90s, they felt a little more tenured. They would be here, but now they see the door opening and closing so fast, that they will not question anything. They feel extremely vulnerable to the realms of today’s administration.

Benedetti: What about regents, alumni, and university donors - the people who are not in the institution now, but who are our support group outside. Do you think there’s been a change in the nature of the alumni organization, the donors, and regents? You’ve mentioned that we need to do more development work, but have you seen any changes or differences in over that time?

Brown: Not, well – I’ll just ask a question - how fast has our endowment grown?

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: I think that will answer the question. You look at the height that our endowment has transpired in 25 years that will tell you the answer to that question.

Benedetti: If you had to look out there, and you’ve talked about programs that you were particularly involved in as a teacher and you felt were successful, but looking out even more broadly about University programs that you may have had something to do with as well as those in the School of Engineering, what do you think over the last 10 or 15 years has been our greatest successful in terms of
programs here at the University and where do you think we haven’t really made it? Now you’ve mentioned fundraising, certainly, but any other programs? Where do you think is our greatest success — whether it’s in the School of Engineering or any place?

Brown: Well, I think we’ve been very successful in graduating students who have the knowledge to be successful and they have done well.

Benedetti: Our graduates.

Brown: Our graduates, I think we should be very proud of our graduates. They have done well and many of them are in very key positions and hopefully over the next decade or two, they will move to higher levels. We had a number of our graduates that had achieved CEO positions and I brought some of them here to speak. One in particular is a guy named Steve Leer and for those not familiar with Steve, Steve was a graduate of our electrical engineering program and became a CEO of Arch Coal Company. Sad to say, the company is bankrupted today, but that’s…

Benedetti: That’s the nature of coal (laughs).

Brown: That’s the nature of coal. But Steven was one of our graduates. Another guy was named Ron Shelly was one of graduates from the computer engineering program and later became a Vice President of Texas Instruments. I got both of those gentlemen back to give commencement addresses for our engineering graduates. They were great. They were role models — superb. Another one that I think the world of is a guy named John Whittaker. Now John is a manager for Northrop in southern California. His claim to fame is he was an engineering that was involved with the Blackbird. The Blackbird, for those that are unfamiliar with it, was the fastest aircraft ever built. John is currently working on aircraft, where if he told me the name, he’d have to shoot me. (smile)

Benedetti: (laughs)

Brown: But he is an engineer par excellence. So those are three of our graduates that I think are just outstanding. Hernandez is a regent.

Benedetti: That’s right.

Brown: And an astronaut. So we’ve done well. We have people that have broken through the glass ceiling that have come out of Pacific. Engineering and computer science have done extremely well.

Benedetti: Let me ask this question slightly differently. Over the years, there have obviously been various crises here at the University, which we’ve overcome or are still fighting. What would you say had been our major crises that we’ve had during your time and how would you comment on how we overcame them?

Brown: One of the major crises we faced was the football program. One of our presidents, DeRosa, made the decision to dissolve it. I got to give him credit. That was an outstanding decision that he made to do that. That was a program that was bleeding us financially to death. It was just way beyond our
capabilities. It was a program that had to go because it was way too expensive for a small private Methodist school such as Pacific. It survives today in major schools such as Stanford and USC, but it’s not here.

Benedetti: That was a big turning point.

Brown: That was a very big turning point. I have to give him credit. DeRosa bit the bullet and actually got rid of it. You’ve got to give him credit for that.

Benedetti: Let me ask some questions about, instead of individual crises that were addressed, but evolution over the time. Do you think the academic quality of the University has changed over the period? Has our quality gone up, gone down, gone up and down?

Brown: I think it’s gone up, but it’s a gradual process. It’s not something you see of dramatic change, but over a period of time our quality’s gone up because our interests of quality of students has gone up. Our SAT scores have gone up. We’re getting better quality students. That forces us to change how we teach and what we focus on. Our program has gotten better. There’s no question about it.

Benedetti: You mentioned also that we had some difficulty with the cheating, but are there anything other than the improved quality of student and also their willingness to cheat, that has changed in the nature of the students that may have been something that we’ve had to respond to or you feel we need to respond to in terms of the classroom? Are there any other changes we’ve had?

Brown: Well, I think we need to respond to the development piece of that. I have students that are demanding higher quality physical facilities.

Benedetti: Ah, okay.

Brown: You can’t deliver...

Benedetti: Without the money.

Brown: Without the money (laughs).

Benedetti: So the students are good enough that they recognizing that we need to be better.

Brown: Absolutely. They can go to community college down the street that has better quality equipment than our engineering school - San Joaquin Delta. And so we have to step up our game in development if we’re going to survive in the future for the simple lack of physical quality and equipment. I have students demanding.

Benedetti: Let me move to a slightly different area. You have been very aware, both with your advisory board, and your working in the community, about the relationship between Stockton and the local communities. What do you think the University has done for Stockton? Do you think it has done good things for Stockton? What are they? And how do you think the University is perceived or been responded to by the community?
Brown: Well I think the University has done great things for the community, but they’re in drifts and drabs. They’re not dramatic changes.

Benedetti: Not consistent.

Brown: Not consistent. They’re in little bits here and little bits there, but we can do much more if we really focused on bringing Stockton’s K-12 up. That is the Achilles heels of this community, in terms of attracting Fortune 100 companies. Our K-12 is, as President Obama says, is Junior Varsity.

Benedetti: Yes (laughs).

Brown: It’s JV.

Benedetti: JV.

Brown: So if we could ever focus on getting K-12 up, and recognized, Stockton will be recognized -simple as that. Nothing complicated. It’s just, get it up. It’s sad to say that the University lives in a community where people pay attention to what goes on on this Ivy school.

Benedetti: Yes, they do.

Brown: And the people in the community listen to it and pay attention and their teachers come here to take classes. We have a graduate program in education that could be the key improvement zone for K-12. And that is a contribution that we could make to the community.

Benedetti: So we haven’t made it yet, but we could make it.

Brown: We could make it. It could be our shining light. I give president Eibeck credit. She started on that. When she came here she moved in that direction. She just needs to follow up, keep it going.

Benedetti: If you look back at your time at Pacific, you must have had some expectations when you came. Has Pacific met them for you? Do you feel that this was what you had expected? (laughs)

Brown: Well I had expectations. The one area that I wished we had a stronger relationship was with Lawrence Livermore because they’re around the corner from us.

Benedetti: Yes they are.

Brown: We have a relationship. I made an appointment to take my students out to Livermore on a class by class basis to expose them to that research from a national level. But I do feel that that’s something that engineering could take further. It would improve our credibility and standing as an engineering school if we had a closer relationship with the National Lawrence Livermore lab. We started some things when I came here, we did them with Joe Subbiondo.

Benedetti: Right.
Brown: But there’s some things that they could do even more so because the thing that I sense there is that we’re within the shadow of a national laboratory and need to be a light beam of our engineering school (laughs). We have not taken advantage of that national research laboratory. The nuclear weapons for this country are designed about 20 miles away.

Benedetti: Yeah, well actually a lot of things are.

Brown: Absolutely.

Benedetti: They have gone around and tried to focus on healthcare and other things.

Brown: Absolutely. Well, Hernandez – that’s where he got his start over there before he became an astronaut. I went to visit him when he was working for Livermore. It is a jewel that we have not taken advantage of in the engineering technological field that we could. That’s the one little area that I wished we had done better with in my 25 years here. But I’m just saying that the new person, the new dean, the new president, those are the areas that they can build upon.

Benedetti: Before I ask you if there’s anything else you want to say, let me oppose a sort of hypothetical for you that are similar to a number of these questions. If you were asked to be the chairmen of the board of regents for this university, and the regents suggested that you draft an agenda for you them to pursue, what would be your top three items that you think at this point, from your experience at the University, ought to pursue? Again, the entire university, in its teaching mission, in its research missions, not just in engineering.

Brown: Well, I think the University needs to look at it as an all-encompassing, but not so broad that it becomes watered down. When I say not so broad, in other words there should be a focus part of the mission that focuses on the teaching, the research, and the institution. But the key parts to fund that would be the development piece.

Benedetti: So the number one for you would be for this new regent position you have would be development?

Brown: Absolutely.

Benedetti: What would number two be?

Brown: Number two would be to raise the research level to a national level. Remember I served as a program director for NSF.

Benedetti: Yes.

Brown: When I went to Washington D.C. and served as a director, in NSF I discovered very quickly that Pacific had no track-record in their database system at NSF for research.

Benedetti: They hadn’t applied and hadn’t won (laughs).
Brown: Well they didn’t have the track record. NSF has these monstrous computer bases that can detect every grant and every rejection that comes. If you went to NSF today, you could look at Ash Brown’s track record of rejections and acceptance of grants. They go back 10 years, 15 years. It’s the same thing with institutions. Having developed a track record of successes at that type of an institution would do wonders.

Benedetti: We haven’t done yet.

Brown: Not yet.

Benedetti: What’s number three?

Brown: Number three is to take on that challenge of helping the community with K-12.

Benedetti: Those three?

Brown: Those three would do well.

Benedetti: Those three. I don’t want you to do ten (laughs).

Brown: No, not ten of them – just those three. Just take three things and do them and do well with those three.

Benedetti: That’s good.

Brown: You can start with the endowment and get to a point where you have a billion dollars in endowment. Now you got an endowment. Anything less than a billion dollars is inconsequential in today’s academic endowments. It won’t significantly help the university. You see the numbers won’t give you a whole lot of power – whether it’s for scholarships, whether its facilities, or anything. Most institutions now that are making headway they’re starting at, like UC Davis, at 3 or 4 billion. That’s their goal. Anything less than a billion dollars, you’re kind of like playing with it.

Benedetti: Is there anything else that by using these questions we haven’t covered that you think should be in the records?

Brown: One area is diversity.

Benedetti: Say a little more about that.

Brown: Well look at the diversity of the faculty, look at the diversity of the staff, and look at the diversity of the administrators.

Benedetti: Now when you say diversity, what do you mean? How would define it?

Brown: You can look at all levels in terms of reflections of the community.

Benedetti: So Pacific ought to more closely reflect the community it lives in?
Brown: Absolutely, absolutely.

Benedetti: Besides, I assume that what you mean by that is gender, and ethnicity, and race.

Brown: Gender and ethnicity and race. All of those, all the above. There is a dramatic difference in the mirror when you look at Pacific and the community. You can look at the number and they’re not there. Until you get those numbers that reflect the community in which you live in, it’s going to be difficult.

Benedetti: Yes because it’s not even – it doesn’t even reflect California.

Brown: No, no. It doesn’t even come close to California. It doesn’t come close. I mean you’re looking at California. California is at a point where the politicians realize that they have to change their story when they come out here to campaign for positions.

Benedetti: Yes, because we’re different.

Brown: We’re different from the other 49 states (laughs).

Benedetti: Right, that’s right - whether they like it or not (laughs).

Brown: Whether they like it or not! So many have basically written it off because they don’t want to deal with it.

Benedetti: Deal with it.

Brown: It’s just unhealable. Their political parties are too unreflective of diversity.

Benedetti: I agree with it. Though I think it’s made us very energized and creative and innovative.

Brown: Yes, but you’re looking at political parties and the parties don’t reflect the diversity of the state. This state is the most diverse, probably, of all the states. I don’t know the exact numbers, but I’m sure it’s up there.

Benedetti: Somebody told me once that LA is the most religiously diverse location on the planet (laughs).

Brown: Are you serious? Religiously diverse?

Benedetti: Yes, so we have a lot of diversities going here.

Brown: Oh yes we do. Well we also have a rich state that has a lot that people would love to emulate.

Benedetti: That’s true.

Brown: You know they tried from all over the globe.

Benedetti: They visit, look, and try to take it home.

Brown: They tried to take it home, but it doesn’t work for them.
Benedetti: No, we have a special soil here (laughs).

Brown: We have some unique soil.

Benedetti: Right, pixie dust.

Brown: ...that doesn’t leave. It stays here. All I’m saying is that when you don’t reflect your community, you are shortchanging yourself.

Benedetti: That’s a good way of putting it.

Brown: You’re basically not playing with a full deck of cards. You don’t have all cylinders popping in the engine. Whatever you want to call it (laughs).