

## Robert Suzuki, Track 3

Tape 2, Side A

JB: Um, just to finish this line of discussion, if you were looking at a working model of an institution around the country that we might aspire to emulate, even in the broadest way, what might that campus be, as we approach these objectives?

RS: I don't think there's an institution in the country that is like the kind of institution that we've been talking about. I think if any institution has a chance of reaching that kind of model, Northridge may be the campus for a lot of different reasons. As I say, I think that we always compare ourselves with the UC system, but if we compare ourselves with the institutions in other states, I think we would be far more positive in our assessments of ourselves. And as I say, I think we have to stop following the lead of the UC and the research institutions. We have to carve out our own role. The fact that the public and leaders in business industry may not see us as important as the UC system, I think it's precisely because we are trying to emulate the research institutions, the UC campuses. They see us as poor imitations of those institutions. This is why, I think, we have to stop trying to emulate them because, if we try to emulate them, we will always be poor imitations of them. We have to begin to carve out our unique role and then sell the importance and significance of that role. So, I think if we do that, we can begin to establish ourselves as a preeminent institution of higher education. We have to define ourselves and then sell people on the importance and significance of that redefined role. I think Northridge is in a good position to develop as a model institution of that kind because, number one, we are a growing institution. We don't have to worry that much about retrenchment, which is a difficult circumstance under which to operate. And secondly, I think we are increasingly gaining control over our resources, both our physical resources and our monetary resources, so that even as we grow, we can enhance our resource base. Now, that is extremely difficult to do. What usually happens is that the resource base gets eroded in terms of the resources available per full time equivalent student. In fact, that's happening in the system as a whole right now. The system as whole has been increasing substantially in enrollment, but the support, dollar support per full time equivalent student is actually showing a downward trend. And I think that is what usually happens when an institution is growing. We have defied that trend on this campus, because we've paid an awful lot of attention to it. And actually, our support per FTES [full time equivalent student] has actually gone up in the last three years. We need to continue to be able to do that, and I think we're in a good position because we have spent a lot of time developing necessary systems to be able to do that. So, that will allow us more flexibility in being able to pursue new programs, enhancing existing programs and achieving the kind of excellence we're talking about. I think if the University Park project does in fact go forward as planned, it could be quite a supplementary resource for the campus. Potential of developing a major endowment over the long haul is quite good if, in fact, those commercial facilities are successful and

begin to generate the revenue that's being projected. I think, also, the fact that we will be hiring large numbers of new faculty over the next ten years, five hundred, six hundred new faculty, is both a tremendous challenge because... question is whether we can hire that many faculty, and even if we do hire that many faculty, whether they will be of the quality we desire, particularly in view of the high housing cost in this area. That's the challenge, but the opportunity is that we'll be bringing a lot of new blood into this university: people with new perspectives, with updated preparation in their fields, with new energy, new ideas and perspectives. And it gives us a tremendous opportunity to develop new programs, enhance existing programs, go into new directions for innovations of various kinds. And I always have felt that faculty are the most important resource that an institution has. So, it's absolutely critical, this issue of hiring new faculty over the next ten years. That's going to determine the quality of this institution, by and large. And so, we need to spend a lot of time and effort on that process. But I think that the research efforts have been increasing. The efforts to improve teaching and learning on this campus is going to, I think, have an important payoff over the next ten years. That's a long term process, as I see it. It's not going to happen in two years or five years. It's going to take at least ten years before we see any significant payoff from our efforts and our structural and developmental pedagogical research program. But when it starts paying off, I think it's going to pay off big. And, for all those reasons, I think that we can reach a level of preeminence. But we're going to have to define that preeminence ourselves, be able to sell that model of higher education. But I really feel that this university has as good a shot at doing that as any campus in the system. Some ways maybe even more than San Diego, which is always looked upon as sort of the flagship campus in the system.

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JB: Looking at the system, and looking at the caliber of the faculty which you've just been talking about, I understand that now half the faculty in the CSU are part timers. What's the percentage on our campus, do you happen to know?

RS: It's about the same, about fifty percent. If you're looking at head count, if you're looking at full time equivalent faculty, they're about twenty-five percent.

JB: How did we arrive at this situation?

RS: It's interesting how we arrived at it. Actually, there was for years, not only on this campus but many other campuses, a rule of thumb that we would not increase our tenure and probationary faculty beyond eighty percent of the total allocation of faculty positions. And we sort of blindly, if you want, applied that rule of thumb. Over the past two years, however, we have examined that rule of thumb and have decided that there's no good rationale for it. Particularly, in view of the projected shortages of faculty over the next ten years, and the increasing retirements. So, what I have told the school deans is that we ought to really be reducing the percentage of our part time faculty and converting increasing numbers of positions to full time probationary positions. And that we should reduce it to at least twenty percent. We're at about twenty five percent now, and in

many cases I said I would even look favorably upon proposals to bring it down to ten percent. Interestingly, there are departments that want to maintain a fairly large percentage of part time faculty. They feel that it gives them flexibility. In some ways, it's exploitation, as I see it, as well, by full time tenured faculty of the part time faculty, because there are some departments on this campus who rely on the part time faculty to teach the large classes and to generate the FTEs so that the senior tenured faculty can have reduced teaching loads. That does occur systematically in a number of departments on this campus. And so, they're very reluctant to bring down the percentage of the part time faculty. We are putting a lot of press on those departments to bring those percentages down. We don't like to see that kind of exploitation of the part time faculty. So, it's, contrary to what the union is saying, it's not the administration that is supporting this large pool of part timers out there. The faculty themselves, the probationary tenure track and tenured faculty see certain advantages in having this large part time pool. It also provides them with a buffer, if there's ever a retrenchment. Of course, we don't expect to see any retrenchment of faculty over the long haul in the next ten to fifteen years. As far as we can project right now, we don't see any downturn, and so we feel those concerns should not be there, but a lot of those attitudes don't change very quickly. A lot of faculty still remember the early eighties when there's always this threat over their heads that there's going to be a significant decline in enrollment and that there will be layoffs of tenured faculty and so forth, and it takes a while to get over those attitudes.

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JB: Some of the faculty, as you know, tend to think of the part time blanket(??) as a reserve army of laborers, as it were, and as the long term threat to the tenure system. That there's a systematic and system-wide design to substitute tenured faculty, uh, substitute untenured faculty to tenured faculty, as the tenured faculty retire. No truth to that, I guess?

RS: I have absolutely no evidence that anyone in the Chancellor's Office or in the administration has any such design. I think that anyone who would like to see a quality institution of higher education would not advocate that. In fact, would advocate the opposite. That we need as many full time tenure track or tenured faculty as we can hire. That tenure track faculty we feel in general have much more of an investment in the institution and therefore a greater commitment to the institution and can spend more time on campus and all of that. That isn't necessarily true, but I think that is the hope, and that is usually true. So that if we are really trying to build quality, we need to hire as many full time tenure track faculty as we can. At least that's my personal philosophy. I have never heard anyone in the Chancellor's Office or anywhere else express the other view that you've articulated.

JB: And it's a campus wide policy, you would say, throughout the administration on this campus—

RS: Right.

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JB: —to maximize the proportion of tenured and tenure track faculty. We're talking about perceptions. And another perception is that, among many, I think it's accurate to say among many, is that in recent years the university's priorities have shifted. And they've shifted, if anything, away from academics. And they've shifted toward athletics in particular as we've moved toward Division One, and they've shifted toward construction in particular as we've moved toward the North Campus project, and toward major capital construction across the "saddle" of the old campus. Um, is it an accurate perception?

RS: I think... I think that that's a hard one to assess, John. Let's take athletics first. I think there are a lot of different forces that led to the decision to go to Division One. It had to do with the size of this institution, for one thing. I think there's a general feeling, particularly by the people in athletics as well as those who are interested in athletics, that this institution is far too large to still be in Division Two. That it's almost embarrassing to be involved in Division Two athletics, which many people see as the division in which the smaller institutions participate. That when you reach the size that we are at, that it makes much more sense to be in Division One. And secondly, I think there are both students and faculty for that matter, who feel that, now that we have reached this size, that we ought to participate in Division One athletics. That it's more exciting division of athletics to be in, that it will attract more students. It will be more interesting for people in general, for the community as well. And I think that while faculty are very concerned about the impact that athletics, particularly Division One athletics, will have on the instructional budget, if we were to put that budget issue to one side, and the faculty only looked at the athletics aspect—let's hypothetically say everyone was satisfied that it was not going to have any impact on the instructional budget of the university—what would the attitude of the average faculty member and the average student on this campus be regarding the move to Division One? My guess is that most faculty, even faculty and most students, certainly, would favor going to Division One athletics because it's a more exciting division. It has more prestige. There's more interest in it. I think that, for example, if you went to UCLA or to USC, and proposed that they moved from Division One to Division Two athletics, there are very few faculty or student who would support that. And, I think it's understandable why they wouldn't support that. They find athletics has become inculcated into our culture in so many different ways. While I find that disturbing for a lot of different reasons, John—in terms of what it reflects about our value system in this society—at the same time, I can understand it because I get caught up from time to time in athletics myself when I see the Lakers going for the championship, or what have you. It is a prime form of entertainment in our society. I can equally criticize it for what it says about our values as well, but I think there's a position somewhere in between, where you have to balance all of those factors. It's a reality that we need to deal with, within our society. And so, what I'm saying is that I think because of the budgetary issue, the move to Division One athletics has become of considerable concern, particularly to the faculty. And that was my primary concern at the time the proposal was made. To what extent is it going to

impact the instructional budget? And when I began to look at what the budgets on other campuses were that were already in Division One, it was a matter of considerable concern to me. What I urged the president to do, was to carefully review the budget for the athletics program here, and to minimize the impact on the instructional budget. And furthermore, I strongly encouraged him to be as open as possible with the athletics budget. I think he admirably met both of those concerns. Number one, I think the budget as it's projected now, does indeed have a minimal impact on the instructional budget, at least on the state side of the instructional budget—

JB: (both talking at once) —traditional side, instructional side.

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RS: Right. And that was really the commitment he made to the faculty senate, that the instructional budget, the state funded instructional budget, would be minimally impacted. And if you go through those budget documents—I've satisfied myself, Bonnie has satisfied herself, that it indeed does have a minimal impact. In fact, it has a far less impact on the instructional budget than the athletics programs on other campuses that are Division One have on their instructional budgets, probably only about sixty percent of the budgets of the other campuses. So, I think that I'm reasonably happy about that aspect of it. The other condition he met was being very open about the budget and providing all the detailed information. That's very unusual and probably unprecedented because it was difficult to even get an idea of what the athletics budgets on these other campuses were from my counterparts, from the other academic vice presidents, who often didn't know what those budgets were themselves. And I don't think any campus has provided the kind of detailed information that the president has on the athletics budget here. And the fact that he's been so open, I think, is important because that means everyone knows what the projections are, what the commitments are, and if there's any deviation from that, everyone's also going to know that. So, I think he has fulfilled the two commitments that he made in that regard, and to me, that's more the issue than whether athletics suddenly has received more priority in recent years than before, because I think the priorities, to a large degree, are driven by resources, and I'm satisfied that the impact on the resources, at least on the state side, is going to be fairly minimal and that we will continue to have the resources available to pursue the academic agenda.

JB: So, you're not expecting a significant impact on academic quality?

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RS: No, I really don't. There's one aspect where there's a potential benefit for the academic area, and this is very debatable area. There are some who feel that our involvement in Division One athletics will not only increase the visibility of our university, but will ultimately assist us in raising supplementary funding from the private sector for our academic programs. I don't know whether that's going to happen or not, John, and I think studies have indicated that that doesn't necessarily happen. I think it does happen at certain institutions like UCLA and USC. I think their athletic programs have in fact

allowed them to increase the contributions they receive for academic programs from the private sector. But those are rather unusual cases, because they do have such high visibility and successful athletic programs. Whether we can ever reach that level is very problematic, but there always is that potential possibility. Now as far as physical facilities go, I think that's probably a bum rap. We both know how congested a situation we've had on this campus over the past many years, and we need desperately some relief from these congested quarters. And we have worked very long and hard at increasing our capital outlay budgets for this campus. And I think we are beginning to reap the fruits of our efforts, first with the new Business- Education building, which is going to be a major new facility for this campus. It's going to add substantial amounts of space, far out of proportion to the growth in FTEs we've seen over the past five years. Plus, it's going to lead to a number of other new and renovated academic facilities on this campus that are sorely needed. So, I think that those projects have rightfully been given the kind of priority they needed. I don't see that as an issue separate from achieving academic excellence. Without those facilities, we won't achieve academic excellence, that's clear. Now as far as the University Park project goes, I think the potential of that project is tremendous, and I must give credit to the president for allowing the special University Park Oversight Committee to be formed under the chairmanship of Dan Blake. I think that committee did an excellent job, and I think that when the University Park project is built, and those guidelines are utilized, it will give us far greater assurance that those commercial facilities will be quite complementary to our academic programs. Over the long haul, I think the potential benefits to this campus could be quite enormous, because not only will the profits from the project be used to help support the construction of academic facilities like a performing arts center, art gallery, football stadium, research labs, things like that, which will complement our academic programs quite directly. Perhaps twenty years down the road, once all of these facilities have been built, the profits from the commercial facilities will continue to accrue to the university, to the tune of several million dollars a year. Those profits will go into an endowment fund for the university, and if that endowment continues to accrue for a period of ten, twenty years, you're looking at a very sizeable endowment for the university, many millions of dollars. So, again, that's a long term project, and it's difficult for faculty to sit here, and here and now, and see any benefits of it. But the faculty that we hire over the next ten years will surely see some of the benefits from that project. So, I can understand the skepticism of the faculty and their impatience, because many of them will probably never see the benefits of a project like that. But I think that a university always has to look toward the future, and build for the future, because we are an institution that will continue to be important over a long period of time and we would do a disservice to the future generations if we don't have that kind of perspective. And institutional change is a very slow process. So, I think while I understand the concerns and the skepticism of the faculty, we really should look at this from a long range perspective and try to assess the benefits from that kind of perspective.

JB: We have about ten more minutes. [Can we] flip these and continue?

RS: Sure.

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