Parents must rise early to ensure their children make the bus before going to work. If students stay after school to participate in extra-curricular activities or sports, they will not arrive home until 5:00 p.m. or later when they then face lengthy and demanding homework assignments. Parents face cultural challenges as well. Unfamiliar with advanced education, parents may ask for help with homework or special projects. Conflicts arise in families when youngsters must miss a trip home for a quinceañera, because of a pressing work in college-prep classes or to prepare for SATs, or why they want to go away to college instead of staying closer to home.

By Bud Mehlan
Professor Emeritus of Sociology

UCSD’s Preuss School, founded twenty years ago, is a success by any measure, even though it only admits applicants by lottery from low-income families in which parents have not had the benefits of college. Its students post the highest reading and math scores of any high school in San Diego County. For the past three years, about 90% of graduating seniors have been accepted by four-year colleges, in getting every single one of the 95 in the class of 2018. These accomplishments are especially impressive because Preuss serves a significantly higher percentage of low-income students of color – 96.29% this year – than other high-performing schools.

People unfamiliar with the reasons for the school’s success are sometimes skeptical of this record. They suppose that the school must “cherry pick” applicants, taking “the cream of the crop,” or that it deliberately inflates students’ grades. Some also accuse UCSD of a blanket policy of accepting all Preuss graduates. None of this is true, and the suppositions betray an unwarranted refusal to believe that low-income students of color can perform at the highest levels when the learning environment is organized for their success.

Why have the Preuss school been so successful? The answer begins with the engagement of parents. The rest stems from an innovative and rigorous approach to education by the school’s dedicated administrators and teachers.

Preuss parents are highly motivated. First, they have to learn about the school. This is not an easy task. The San Diego Unified School District does not advertise Preuss or other charter schools to “regular” elementary schools. Parents must learn about them by word of mouth, including from teachers. Next, they must complete a complicated application packet, which requires letters of recommendation, statements of purpose, and financial information. On their own, the youngsters are accepted, parents face transportation challenges. Most Preuss families live in Southeastern San Diego, near or even across the border. Bus rides are 45 minutes or more each way.

Why the Preuss School Succeeds

A Culture of Learning: Why the Preuss School Succeeds

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Once their children gain admission, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school. The principal holds monthly parent meetings, attended, on average, by approximately 200. Parents are non-voting members of the School’s Board of Directors. They are invited to assist with after-school clubs and sports.

Next, innovative structural features contribute to the success of the college-bound Preuss students. Preuss is an ideal college, as one of the class periods is dedicated to academic advice and personal guidance, ideally led by the same Preuss teachers from 6th to 12th grade. Having consistent Advisory Teachers is intended to foster trusting relationships between students and teachers. Advisory Teachers provide strategies for mastering course material; they arrange for individual or group tutoring for challenging courses (especially calculus and AP European History). As college application time approaches, they offer college information, test prep, financial aid in formation, and guidance in preparing statements of purpose. They play an important role in preparing their advisees for their year-end "Presentations of Learning."

Students also engage their Advisory teacher in personal issues, such as fears/rejection about going to college. Neighborhood peers may mock them for wearing uniforms, or starting school earlier in the year and ending later. They may have difficult interactions with a particular teacher.

These interpersonal relations are less visible but equally as important as the structural dimensions of the school's college policy was instituted to give Preuss students access to a demanding course of study as an end in itself and at the same time to prepare them for college courses. AP courses have the additional benefit of adding points to students' GPA. An A is an AP course counts as a 5 on the 4-point GPA calculation; B counts as a 4, etc. (This scheme accounts for US students accumulating 4.5 GPAs and higher on a 4.0 scale.)

Preuss seniors participate in a three-part program ("the wheel") composed of community service, an internship, and a research project. Students often return to their home communities to tutor younger students or assist public service organizations. They serve as interns in UCSD academic departments, the theater, or administrative offices. The topics of research projects are often drawn from course work, new experiences, or public service. Near the end of the school year, seniors present a review of their work to a panel ideally composed of a Preuss faculty, a UCSD faculty, and a community member. The oral and written presentation, the actual presentation, and the ensuing question--answer period strengthen students' oral and writing communication skills in an environment that imitates the exchanges students will encounter in college courses.

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You’ve Got Your Crust! And so do I.

By Sandy Lakoff

Bread has been a dietary staple ever since the first flat versions emerged from earthen ovens in the region aptly known in French as the Croissant Fertile. It’s not everyone’s “staff of life,” to be sure, and we all have to curb our carbs. Some societies rely more on rice and some people have a problem digesting gluten. Personally, I am not addicted to all its forms — just most of them. Let me count the ways:

When you and I were young, Maggie, the most common form in this country was the packaged sliced white one, introduced in 1928. The brands I remember were Bond, Taystee, Wonder, and Silvercup. They were cheap, good for pb-and-j sandwiches, and the fresh loaves, even in their wrappers, gave off an inviting aroma. But they were hardly very exciting to the palate. (Healthier cracked or whole wheat at least restored the nutrients removed for the sake of whiteness.) And, let’s be honest, they were as bland as so much else of Anglo-American cuisine. (Who can forget the scene in Annie Hall where Woody Allen prepares to meet Annie’s W expiry family by grimly stuffing himself with slices of packaged white bread slathered in mayonnaise.) I pass over burger buns and hot dog rolls with the silence they deserve.

Fortunately, there were better options. In my hometown in New Jersey, I would jostle with the grown-ups on Sunday morning to pick up a loaf of our Pride Bakery’s fabled round corn rye — celebrated in New York Magazine as the best version in the entire metropolitan area. And who could resist its “salt sticks,” horn-shaped rolls topped by caraway seeds, and the soft buns you could poke into and fill with jam?

Other places had options just as good. In Philadelphia, Freihofer’s would leave a little bag of freshly baked breakfast rolls every morning on home going culture. Teachers and staff are selected because they are subject matter experts and believe that low-income under-represented minority (URM) students can succeed at the highest levels. They manifest this caring in day-to-day interactions with students.

Preuss educators realize the value, indeed the necessity, of an extensive support system to ensure the success of their students. To this end, the student-teacher ratio (20-25:1) is lower than the average in low-income neighborhoods that can reach 30-35:1. Smaller class sizes promote opportunities for more intense teacher-student interaction on the individual and group level. The school has a full-time nurse. (The teachers’ union in Chicago is the most recent group to recognize the value of similar support services when bargaining with their district.)

At the outset, the founders of Preuss hoped it would prepare low-income youth for admission to college and become a model for public education. The first goal has certainly been met and exceeded. The second had a more limited but tangible success. Gompers Preparatory Academy, a “UCSD Partnership School” in Southwestern San Diego has incorporated many Preuss features into its college-prep program. So, too, UCLA and Berkeley have built “university assisted schools” like Preuss and Gompers in nearby disadvantaged communities.

Interviews with educators who have visited Preuss report that financial cost and rigid bureaucracy in most school districts prohibits adoption of extended learning time, within-school day professional development, and other worthwhile modifications of their schools’ structure and practices. It seems that decision makers and the public have to be convinced that increasing funding for public education is necessary in order to adopt the distinctive features of the Preuss model for a college-going culture to benefit low-income youth on a larger scale.

Mehran was Director of the UCSD Center for Research on Educational Equity, Access, and Teaching Excellence from 1998-2011.

“Dare to be Dull”, (Part II) The Evolution of UCSD TV

By Mary Walshok

Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Programs and Dean, University Extension, and General Manager, UCSD-TV

By 1995, UCSD-TV became a much more structured enterprise as Lynn Burnstam became Station Manager. Under Lynn’s leadership, we have been able to create a sustainable and scalable television service that is the envy of universities across America. That appointment came at the time when foundations like Carnegie, the Century Fund, and Haas were looking into new civic roles for broadcast organizations. Larry Grossman, the former director of NBC News and EPRI, was investigating the promise of new digital technologies to transform broadcast media into resources for arts, education, and in particular, public affairs and civic engagement. Because UCSD-TV was up and running, we began to participate in forums and conversations across the country. We had developed a unique business model. We were capturing and producing public affairs programming. We had collaborators across the campus, at SIO, CONNECT, in the Arts and Humanities, as well as in community partnerships like San Diego Opera, the Natural History Museum, and the City Club, all of which were interested in sharing their cultural, educational, and research content with a growing public audience. The early 2000s were a very heady time indeed.

Another pivotal moment came when Richard Atkinson became UC President. Within a year, he began discussing with the team at UCSD how to launch a UC-wide network on the model of what we had done here. An opportunity to secure a channel on the Dish Network presented itself. And as of 1999, the Office of the President invested substantial funds enabling UCSD-TV to work with campuses across the UC system on the C-SPAN model we had adopted. Over the Christmas break, the enterprising UCSD-TV team, led by the superb Sherman George and a number of on-campus IT leaders, scrambled to...
Two distinguished UCSD emeriti – Joel Dimsdale and Henry C. Powell – have been awarded this year’s Edward A. Dickson Professorships. This award, given annually on each UC campus, honors faculty who have made exemplary post-retirement contributions.

Edward A. Dickson served as a regent of the University of California from 1913 to 1946, the longest tenure of any regent. In 1955, Mr. Dickson presented the university with an endowment to support and maintain special annual professorships to be awarded to retired academic faculty members. The award is described in the gift document as follows.

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Joel E. Dimsdale, MD

Since retiring as Professor of Psychiatry in 2010, Dimsdale has been co-author of 93 published papers on medical psychology. In 2016, his book Anatomy of Malice: the Anatomy of the Nazi War Criminals, based on psychiatric examination of defendants tried and convicted at Nuremberg, appeared from the Yale University Press. It received highly favorable reviews and has been translated into seven other languages. For many years he worked on the edition that appeared in 2013 of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) – the standard professional psychiatric source book. From 2012 to 2013 he chaired the Council on Psychosocial Medicine of the American Psychiatric Association. From 2013 to 2016, he was Editor at Large of the Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine and continues to serve on the editorial board of UpToDate, one of the most influential medical textbooks.

At UCSD, he served from 2009 to 2018 as founding director of a highly successful program designed to identify and mentor young faculty in the health sciences. As of September 2018, 92% of those mentored had gone on to become principal investigators and co-investigators, publishing a total of 511 scholarly papers.

In addition, Dimsdale has continued to lecture extensively in psychiatry here and at many other academic institutions, in this country, Germany, and South Korea.

Henry C. Powell

Harry C. Powell, MD, Professor of Medicine Emeritus, who holds both the M.D. and D.Sc. degrees, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathology of London, was a major contributor to all the pathology programs of the UCSD Medical School. Since retirement in 2012, he has continued to teach in the School of Medicine and the Skaggs School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He also continues to provide clinical services at the UCSD Medical Hillcrest, the Veterans Administration Medical Center, and as a consultant to the Kaiser Foundation Hospital, and serves as co-editor of one academic journal and on the editorial board of one of the most influential medical textbooks.

Powell has also played an exceptionally active role in university affairs, serving as representative to and chair of the UC Academic Senate, and after retirement as a member of the UC Press editorial board, the Academic Council of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, and the UC Academic Center on the National Laboratories. He has served the Emeriti Association as Vice President and President and on its nominating and award committees. He has also played a leading role in the Emeriti Mentoring Program, serving as Director for two years.
get us on The Dish Network and to package an initial offering of primarily UCSD-TV programming so that we could go "live" January first. Within a few years, working now with a system-wide advisory committee, UC TV developed important strategic partnerships: UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Cooperative Extension, and UC medical schools, as well as the Goldman School of Public Policy at Berkeley. Many of the campuses were already producing broadcast-quality programming so we were able to harvest work they were doing and bundle it all into about 7,724 television services which today represents only about 30% of UCSD campus programming and 70% from the University.

The infusion of resources and connections enabled by UC TV benefited the UCSD campus station enormously. The ability to represent the full range of campus programming and to establish the station on the premises opened doors to foundations and national conversations and funders, all of whom were keenly interested in digital technologies. One such was Google, who in their early days approached us about being a beta site because of their content-rich I.T. program. They provided us with financial resources, but just as importantly, advised us how to think about the web shaping our broadcast content and programming. They made obvious the need to think about how our programs would be identified on the web. Our reputation was enhanced.

In addition, resources and connections enabled by UC TV benefitted the UCSD medical community. They and other advisors suggested that it was the right time for us to put our broadcast spectrum into an auction. All of this occurred as Chancellor Khosla was taking the reins. At the most senior level we agreed with those advisors, one of whom was a reporter at the New York Times which eventually featured his work on the cover of its Sunday magazine for which he has been eternally grateful to UC TV.

These experiences led us to understand that our future as a TV station was not tied so much to broadcasting as it was to our ability to establish a presence on the web. For the last decade, UCSD-TV and UC TV have been leveraging the early knowledge we acquired from Google and then YouTube to create the websites that attract visitors from not only California, but across the country and around the world to the websites we identified as our Brain, Motherhood, and Public Policy. We produce and capture more than 200 new programs annually and showcase an equal number of faculty annually.

The most recent tipping point for UCSD-TV was the decision more than two years ago to enter our broadcast spectrum into a highly profile FCC auction. For the years preceding the auction, we had many approaches from both commercial and not-for-profit broadcast entities offering us anywhere from one to five million dollars for our license. These offers made us suspect that we had an asset that was going to be increasingly valuable because the growing demand for spectrum in the digital age exceeded the available space. We were correct. When we learned that we would be able to buy back licenses from existing stations in an auction in which we would then turn around and sell at a high rate to commercial and not-for-profit broadcast entities, we called our attorneys in Washington. They and other advisors suggested that it was the right time for us to put our broadcast spectrum into an auction. All of this occurred as Chancellor Pradeep Khosla was taking the reins. At the most senior level we agreed with those advisors, one of whom was a reporter at the New York Times which eventually featured his work on the cover of its Sunday magazine for which he has been eternally grateful to UC TV.

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Irish Soda Bread

Haleem Bread

Fenneltons

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A few choices offered by Bread & Cie.

UCSD Emeriti Association
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UCSD’s Preuss School, founded twenty years ago, is a success by any measure, even though it only admits applicants by lottery from families in which parents have not had the benefits of college. Its students post the highest reading and math scores of any high school in San Diego County. For the past three years, about 90% of graduating seniors have been accepted by four-year colleges, including every single one of the 95 in the class of 2018. These accomplishments are especially impressive because Preuss serves a significantly higher percentage of low-income students of color—96.29% this year—than other high-performing schools.

People unfamiliar with the reasons for the school’s success are sometimes skeptical of this record. They suppose that the school must “cherry pick” applicants, taking “the cream of the crop,” or that it deliberately inflates students’ grades. Some also accuse UCSD of a blanket policy of accepting all Preuss graduates. None of this is true, and the suppositions betray an unwarranted refusal to believe that low-income students of color can perform at the highest levels when the learning environment is organized for their success.

Why has the school been so successful? The answer begins with the engagement of parents. The rest stems from an innovative and rigorous approach to education by the school’s dedicated administrators and teachers.

Preuss parents are highly motivated. First, they have to learn about the school. This is no easy task. The San Diego Unified School District does not advertise Preuss or other charter schools to “regular” elementary schools. Parents must rise early to ensure their children make the bus before going to work. If students stay after school to participate in extra-curricular activities or sports, they will not arrive home until 5:00 p.m. or later when they then face lengthy and demanding homework assignments.

Parents face cultural challenges as well. Unfamiliar with advance education, parents have reported in interviews that they do not know enough to help their students with homework or special projects. Conflicts arise in families when youngsters must miss a trip home to Mexico for a weekend, or a quinceanera, because of a pressing school assignment. Preuss students report that their parents do not understand how hard they have to work in college-prep classes or to prepare for SATs, or why they want to go away to college instead of staying closer to home.