Chapter 6: Re-Establishment of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)

**Historical Background:**
The Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) was founded at San José State in 1969 with the goal of helping marginalized communities achieve a four-year degree. As stated in Chapter 3, the Chicano student walkout helped push the university to create the EOP. The program began with 200 students, but in two distinct parts, with the “Black EOP” serving African American students and the “Brown EOP” serving Chicano students.

By the early 1970s, the two programs were merged, and by the 1980s, EOP was flourishing, with more EOP students admitted to San José State University—the campus changed its name again in 1974—and with EOP becoming a comprehensive program, which included recruiting, pre-admission advising, a summer bridge program for incoming students, tutoring, grants, and career counseling.

Yet, in late 1990s, California changed the way it funded higher education, moving away from line-item funding to providing the campus with a block grant, which gave each CSU campus the ability to choose where to spend its money. Some CSUs decided to maintain EOP funding at current rates, while other CSUs increased EOP funding. This was not the case at SJSU, where EOP funding was continually cut, and by 2002, there was no funding for EOP. In 2004, there were 2,000 EOP students but only one part-time staff member to support them.¹
The Events

In 2008, Students for EOP and faculty led a campaign to re-instate the program at SJSU. The main student leaders were Chris “Timbo” Temblador and Diana Victa. The students held marches and rallies, and presented their case to the Associated Student (AS) Board of Directors. As part of their campaign, Timbo decided to take a bold action before the student government voted on whether to support the demand asking the university president re-establish the Equal Opportunity Program. The night before the meeting, Timbo shaved his head (he had had very long, black hair) and phoned his friends to see if they had any handcuffs. The following day at school, Timbo walked around campus with his head shaved and hands cuffed, with tape covering his mouth. His t-shirt read, “Budget Cuts, Fee Hikes, No Student Services, No EOP, No Education”. As he walked around campus, people were stunned to see Timbo this way. When students took interest, Timbo didn’t speak— he couldn’t as his mouth was taped shut—rather, he passed out a note asking students to attend that day’s AS Board of Directors meeting to support the demand of Students for EOP.ii

Many students were so moved by Timbo’s individual act of courage that the AS Board of Directors meeting was packed, which most likely helped the board to support the resolution unanimously. The faculty union passed a similar resolution, and together the students and faculty formed a task force, which demanded a director, an EOP Council that had representatives from the students and faculty, and a designated space. After meeting with the students and faculty, President Kassing agreed to the demands. In 2010, the restoration of EOP began, and today, EOP serves 2,000 first generation, low-income students by providing five academic advisors, a tutoring center, a summer bridge program, workshops and professional development, a Guardian Scholar program for foster youth, and an EOP graduation ceremony and honors luncheon.iii

Resources:
Chapter 7: CAFÉ J and the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage

**Historical Background:**
In 2010, the cost of living in the U.S. was going up, while wages for the working class were stagnant. In Silicon Valley, rent was $1,600 for an apartment, gasoline was $4 a gallon, and the cost of tuition had increased by 141% over the past several years. At that time, minimum wage was $8 an hour in San José, which if working full-time, wasn’t even enough to rent an apartment. Since the majority of SJSU students work during their college-years, and with about one-quarter of them making minimum wage, and many more making just above minimum wage, it was the perfect storm.

It all began when Marisela Castro, an SJSU student and daughter of farmworkers, was working at an afterschool program. At that program, Marisela saw kids taking snacks and putting them into their backpacks. When she asked the kids about why they were taking the food that was meant for the students in the program, they disclosed that they did this because they didn’t have enough food at home, and their brothers and sisters were hungry. Marisela asked them if their father and mother were working, and the kids told her that both of them were working, but they were at minimum wage, so there wasn’t enough money to buy food sometimes. Moreover, Marisela learned that one of the dad’s was working two jobs, making it difficult to provide the necessary support structure for their children to be successful in school. Marisela was outraged.

During her Wealth, Poverty and Privilege course, she told Professor Myers-Lipton the story and said, “Profe, we have to do something. This can’t continue for another generation.” In the course, the students had read about raising the minimum wage at the local level, and after class, she came up to the professor to discuss the possibility of doing this in San José. Dr. Myers-Lipton told her that there was no action component in the Wealth, Poverty and Privilege course, but there was an action component in Social Action, and that she should considering taking it the following semester, which she did.
The Events:

At the beginning of the next semester, Marisela presented her idea of raising the minimum wage to her Soci. 164: Social Action class, and three students–Leila McCabe, Saul Gonzalez, and Heather Paulson–decided to join her campaign. First, the students reviewed the literature and found that the research showed that three cities had already significantly increased their citywide minimum wage: San Francisco ($10.24 an hour), Santa Fe, New Mexico ($10.29 an hour), and Washington, DC ($8.25 an hour). Furthermore, the raise in the wage did not increase the unemployment rate or had little to no negative impact on small businesses because they generally passed on the cost by raising prices slightly. In fact, the research showed that there was a positive impact on businesses since minimum-wage workers stayed in their jobs longer. 

After several meetings, these four students decided to put forward a city-wide ballot measure to be voted on to raise the minimum wage from $8 to $10, with an annual cost of living increase. The students named their group the Campus Alliance for Economic Justice (CAFÉ J), and for four consecutive Social Action classes, the students—including two amazing student leaders, Elisha St. Laurent and Diana Crumedy—worked on this issue. During the two-year campaign, the students and their allies tabled, conducted a poll, held rallies and sleepouts, gathered signatures, and made 1,000s of phone calls to potential voters. The students’ main target was the voting population of San José, with a secondary target being the City Council, since they had the power to enact the measure once the students and their allies had gathered 36,000 signatures, which was considerably more than was necessary.

In November of 2012, the students along with the help of their labor, faith, and non-profit allies, had a huge victory, as San José voters passed the minimum wage increase by 60% to 40%. This increase to the minimum wage was one of the largest one-time increases in the history of the nation, and it won easily, even though the students and their allies were outspent 10 to 1.
In the years since the implementation of San José’s $10 minimum wage, the results were all positive, as the numbers of businesses grew, unemployment was reduced, the number of minimum-wage jobs had expanded, and the average employee hours remained constant. In the fall of 2016, CAFÉ J students worked with the Mayor, City Council, and community groups to push the minimum wage to $15 by 2019. viii

Resources:

- “Raise the Wage, To Raise My Son”, Silicon Valley De-Bug, October 17, 2012, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbrVNaOMHwE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbrVNaOMHwE) (accessed February 4, 2018).
Chapter 8: Students for DMH and the Fight for Air Conditioning

Historical Background:
On the campus of San José State sits Dudley Moorhead Hall (DMH), a building that hosts four departments, many faculty offices and classrooms, and serves over 3,000 students a day. DMH was constructed in 1957, but without air conditioning. With its west-facing side exposed to direct sunlight, temperatures in DMH on some April through October days reached 90 degrees and above. For the past 50 years, stories had been told about the intolerable conditions of DMH, but little was done to fix the problem. For at least 20 years, the University told students and faculty that there was no need for air conditioning in DMH because the university was going to knock it down and replace it. Somehow, there was never enough money in the budget to build a replacement building.

The Events:

Things came to a head when several students fainted in DMH on hot days, while others students missed class due to the heat. The Chair of the Psychology Department wrote a letter to the University complaining about the conditions in DMH, which was followed up by a formal
complaint lodged by the California Faculty Association. Then, Amanda Adalma, class of ’14, decided that she had enough, and she started to organize students in the fall of 2013 under the name Students for DMH.

Over the next two and one-half years, the students held rallies, met with administrators, conducted student questionnaires, handed out hand-held fans with Students for DMH on them, passed out water and popsicles in front of DMH, did a cost estimate to install air conditioning, and all with the goal of getting the University to agree to their demand of air conditioning in DMH. When Students for DMH spoke to other students, their opening line was “Are you hot in DMH?” As part of their research, the students learned that schools with a large population of working-class students of color were twice as likely to be in buildings constructed in the 1950s, and that many of them were without air conditioning. This information provided the students with the frame that they were being treated unfairly due to their social class and race and ethnicity.

On April 16, 2014, Students for DMH held a “faint-in”, which was a theatrical event, calling on students to faint in the hallways of DMH to draw attention to the unbearable conditions in the building. That afternoon, as students were leaving their classrooms, and with TV cameras rolling, about 100 students fainted in the hallways. After ten minutes of laying on the ground, the students got up and walked through the building chanting “We Need Change, It’s Too Hot”. After chanting, the students marched to the university president’s office, where they attempted to meet with President Mohammad Qayoumi. The “faint-in” made it on local television stations and on the front page of the campus paper.

After continual pressure by the students through the spring and fall semester of 2015, President Susan Martin decided to approve a $3 million air conditioning plan for DMH. The students celebrated with a news conference, which again received local media attention. After the end of the spring semester in 2016, DMH was shut down for installation of the air conditioning, and at the beginning of the spring 2017 semester, DMH was re-opened with air conditioning in every office and classroom.

Resources:
- Mike Colgan, KCBS News, December 14, 2015, click to listen (mp3):
Chapter 6


Chapter 7


Chapter 8


x Students for DMH, “Finally, Air Conditioning in SJSU’s Dudley Moorehead Hall,” Press Release, December 10, 2016 (PDF).