ACCESS: The collection is open for research.

Background

In the 1960s, a time characterized by anti-war protests and the Civil Rights Movement, college campuses around the world began to take part in widespread political and social activism. In 1968, Fresno State College (now California State University, Fresno), became another player in this political struggle as its campus was transformed from a traditional, primarily agricultural and teacher’s college, into one in which conservative and liberal factions openly and publicly fought, both through the administrative structure of the university and through campus-wide protests, which often turned violent.

Campus unrest at Fresno State began in 1968 when Frederic Ness, the president of the university, chose not to retain English faculty member Robert Mezey in spite of a fervent recommendation from both the English Department and Dale Burtner, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. Mezey had become a source of controversy on the campus and in the larger community when, in November of 1967, he was invited to speak at the “Panel on Pot,” a debate and discussion about marijuana. During the presentation, Mezey commented that marijuana had not been proven harmful and that the laws against its consumption were unjust. After these statements were made public, and often misinterpreted as an endorsement for drug use, complaints about Mezey’s liberal and unlawful politics began to pour into Ness’s office and the local newspaper, The Fresno Bee.

After Ness terminated Mezey’s employment, student and faculty protests began. They continued as Ness released a prominent Black Muslim instructor, Marvin Jackman (Marvin X). His termination brought on more protests. The publicity and scandal associated with these cases led to Ness’s resignation in the fall of 1969.

On October 28, 1969, Karl Falk was appointed as acting president. After only five days, Falk announced a massive realignment of the college structure. Dale Burtner, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, was reassigned and replaced with Phillip Walker. Harold Walker, the executive vice president, was reassigned and replaced with James Fikes. These reassignments once again caused a rift in the campus community, resulting in even more protests. Falk also instigated layoffs and curtailing of funds in the Experimental College, the Ethnic Studies Program and the Educational Opportunities Program.

These changes resulted in peaceful as well as violent student activism. Protests continued and began to be connected with larger societal issues, including the Vietnam War.

With the campus in an uproar, the search began for a permanent administrator to relieve Falk of his duties. On July 14, 1970, Norman Baxter was inaugurated as the president of Fresno State College. His presidency was marked by the cancellation of the La Raza Studies program and campus unrest in response to his administrative policies. The Student Senate, in a vote of nineteen to four, administered a vote of “no confidence” in Baxter’s ability to run the school.
Background (cont.)

At three o’clock on Friday, December 4, 1970, the tension and distrust of the Baxter administration increased exponentially. The dean of the School of Humanities, Ralph Rea, accompanied by campus policemen, marched into the English Department and hand delivered letters of dismissal to Eugene Zumwalt, the department’s chairman, and Roger Chittick, the assistant chairman. The men and the department’s secretaries were then forcibly removed from the office. Another police officer and a maintenance man entered and began sealing the office and its contents, padlocking filing cabinets and barricading the entrance with metal plates. Policemen also guarded the door.

Rea continued exerting control of the English Department as he was made the acting chairman, replacing Zumwalt. In an effort to calm what the administration thought was an ideologically radical faculty, Rea altered faculty roles, fired instructors, and changed programs within the department.

Scope and Content Note

The Campus Unrest collection measures 1.75 linear feet and dates from 1965 to 1979 and undated. The collection is arranged in five series: Administrations, Ethnic minorities, Faculty and student activism, Other universities, and Policies and reports. It primarily covers unrest that took place on the campus of Fresno State College but also contains information about unrest around the state, country, and world. This information was collected over time by the University Archives from various sources.

The Administrations series (1967-1979 and undated) provides detailed information about the administrations that were in power during the period of campus unrest on the Fresno State campus. This specifically includes records relating to presidents Frederic Ness, Karl Falk, and Norman Baxter. The series is arranged in the order of their presidencies.

The Frederic Ness subseries primarily covers personnel issues that his administration dealt with during his presidency, with specific details about the dismissals of Marvin Jackman (Marvin X) and Robert Mezey. There are also records related to Ness’s resignation.

The Karl Falk material deals primarily with public opinion and personnel issues, including the demotion of Dale Burtner. There is also significant information about the public opinion surrounding Falk’s actions as president of the university as well as the protests that ensued in response to his administrative policies.

The Norman Baxter section includes information about how Baxter dealt with personnel issues, protests that took place on campus and in the community, and public opinion concerning his administrative policies. The Baxter-Volpp faculty survey and Fresno Review Panel folders
Scope and Content Note (cont.)

give information about official audits that investigated the lawfulness of the administration’s actions.

The Ethnic minorities series (1968-1971, 1978-1979 and undated) details the actions of minority students on campus and the policies that affected their education. There is specific information about African American and Chicano students as well as the Educational Opportunity Program (E.O.P.) and the Ethnic Studies Program.

The Faculty and student activism series (1965-1971 and undated) contains information on political activism on the Fresno State campus. This consists of information on Viet Nam War protests, a grape boycott with the United Farm Workers and Black Panthers’ activity as well as issues specific to the university, including publications from Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.), and activism related to academic freedom.

The Other universities series (1965-1971, 1978 and undated) provides information about campus unrest at other universities.

There is detailed information about unrest that took place at other California universities. This primarily consists of information regarding activities that took place at other schools within the California State College system, with a specific emphasis on the San Francisco campus, and those within the University of California system. There is also information on Stanford University and the University of Southern California.

The information on universities in the United States details campus unrest that took place on campuses across the country, primarily on the East Coast or in the Midwest.

The International subseries contains information on unrest that took place on college campuses in Europe, including the Free University of Berlin and the London School of Economics.

There are also Editorials and speculation as to the cause of campus unrest, both in the United States and internationally. This includes diagnoses of the problem as well as ideas for change.

The Policies and reports series (1967-1973, 1979 and undated) includes information on the policies of Ronald Reagan, Governor of California, and Glenn S. Dumke, Chancellor of the California State College system. There are also numerous reports on the unrest at Fresno State College. These include an identification of the problem, description of campus activities, and proposals for dealing with the unrest.
Related Collections

Frederic W. Ness Papers
Contains information on Ness’s presidency, including the Marvin X and Robert Mezey incidents. There is also a report that Ness wrote while on leave from Fresno State College titled *Student Unrest in Great Britain* (1969). See Box 2, Professional; Fresno State presidency and Box 2, Professional; Reports.

University Archives
President Ness’s address to the Board of Trustees presenting the master plan, June 26, 1968 (1/4” reel to reel)

Marvin X television statements, October 1969 (1/4” reel to reel)

Box no.   Description

Box 1

Administrations
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Editorials, 1967-1970 and undated
Newspaper clippings, 1968-1969, 1977 and undated
Personnel issues
General, 1968-1970 and undated
Consultative procedures, 1965-1969
Jackman, Marvin (Marvin X)
General, 1969-1970 and undated
Memoranda, 1969
Newspaper clippings, 1969 and undated
Mezey, Robert
Memoranda, 1968
Opinion
Pro-Mezey
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Pro-Ness, 1968
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Resolutions, 1968
Ronwin, Edward 1969
Resignation, 1969-1970 and undated
Walker, Harold E. (Executive Vice President), 1968-1969 and undated
Falk, Karl
“Academic Freedom–Academic Anarchy” (speech given by Falk for the Fresno County Bar Association), 1970 and undated
Fikes, James (Executive Vice President), 1969-1970 and 1979
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Opinion
General, 1969-1971, 1976 and undated
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American Federation of Teachers (AFT), 1970 and undated
Speeches, 1969-1970
Official councils, committees, reports, 1969-1970 and undated
Support for Falk, 1969-1970
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Burtner, Dale
General, 1969-1970 and undated
Chronology of events, 1969-1970
Memoranda, 1968 and 1970
Newspaper clippings, 1969-1970 and undated
Petition of appeal, 1970 and undated
Procedural violations committed by Falk, undated
Review of Dean Burtner, 1970
Consultative Procedures Committee
Petition of Appeal, 1969
Response, 1969
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Decision, 1970
Murray, Paul F., 1970
Walker, Evelynne, 1970
Protests
General, 1969-1970 and undated
Law enforcement and legal issues
General, 1969-1970
Detention of Phillip Walker, 1970
Walker, Phillip (Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences), 1969-1970 and undated (see also University administrations; Falk, Karl; Protests; Law enforcement and legal issues; Detention of Phillip Walker)
Baxter, Norman
Memoranda, 1970-1971
Newspaper clippings, 1970, 1977-1979 and undated
Opinion
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Official councils, committees, reports
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Fresno Review Panel, 1978 and undated
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<td>Zumwalt, Eugene and Chittick, Roger, 1970-1972 and undated</td>
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<td>Volpp, Louis (Vice President of Academic Affairs), 1978-1979</td>
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| **Ethnic minorities** | |
| African American students, 1968-1971 and undated (see also Faculty and student activism; Black Panthers, 1968 and undated) | |
| Chicano students, 1969-1970 and undated | |
| **Ethnic Studies Program** | General, 1969-1970 and undated |
| Black Studies, 1969-1970 | |
| Chicano/La Raza Studies, 1969-1970 and 1978 | |
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| **Faculty and student activism** | General, 1967 and 1970 |
| Academic freedom, 1968-1971 and undated (see also Administrations; Falk, Karl; “Academic Freedom—Academic Anarchy,” 1970 and undated) | |
| Black Panthers, 1968 and undated | |
| Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.), 1966, 1968 and undated | |
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| Viet Nam War | Newspaper clippings, 1967-1970 and undated |

| **Other universities** | California |
| California State College (CSC) system | General |
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Other universities (cont.)

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  - CSC, Hayward, 1968
  - CSC, Long Beach, 1968-1969
  - CSC, Los Angeles, 1968
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  - CSC, San Francisco
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Policies and reports
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- Dumke, Glenn S. (Chancellor of the California State College system)
  - Correspondence, 1968 and undated
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<td>“The Strangulation of Fresno State” (Hillenbrand, Barry), 1971</td>
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