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## "Disorientation": Its Theoretical Underpinnings and Its Political Potential at the University of Puget Sound

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## Transcription:

### **EPISODE 1:**

**This past semester, I have done research and theorized around Disorientation Guides, which students and student-activists have developed for over half a century as a means of challenging the prevailing image of the university as a center for liberal education. The guides, which are most often handbooks but which also exist in digital formats, provide a material and ideological critique of the university and attempt elevate the autonomy and sovereignty of the student body. The origin of the guides is incredibly difficult to track down. One early Disorientation packet, from 1977, provides the following description how a Disorientation Program at UC Berkeley started out:“ The purpose of the Disorientation was to provoke discussion about the University as an institution, its role in society, and its impact on the values and aspirations of its students.” It’s eminently clear that disorientation has existed in a number of forms for many decades. Antonia Darder, a professor at the university of Illinois Urbana Champaign writes that: "Each publication specifically addresses its own campus, in an effort to provide in-coming students with the real deal on university politics and the college experience, particularly for those concerned with issues of social justice and human rights. Additionally, These publications seek to provide access to an often silenced history of the institution and helpful hidden facts. The work of Disorientation is very much ongoing, as evidenced**

by a slew of Disorientation Guides that were published this calendar year. A significant development that I've noticed is in the form of the distribution of the guides, several of which have been trending towards online publication even before the COVID-19 Pandemic rendered print publication nearly impossible. While some students may mourn the loss of print media and physical distribution, it's also true that online publication enables a greater degree of ongoing engagement and collaboration, facilitating a more seamless evolution of the document from year to year. The guides, online or otherwise, are a potentially vital method for preserving institutional memory and for benefiting and engaging future generations of University of Puget Sound students. But what do Disorientation Guides do? From a theoretical standpoint, Disorientation guides address campus space by understanding the university and the disempowered position of students within it. The authors of a Disorientation Zine from University of Texas at Austin in 2019 write that: "DisOrientation names the strategies we use when we reclaim space here in opposition to the University, when we enter all the subcultures and social spaces that exist beyond it." There is really no limit to the number of approaches a disorientation guide can take. In my research, I've encountered the following motivations for doing Disorientation: to de-mythologize the university, to chronicle the history of student activism, to provide an introduction to local issues, to call for direct action, to expose the University's perpetuation of historical and ongoing

**injustices, as a recruitment technique, to offer tips and tricks for campus life, sharing strategies for mutual and self care, to tell the story that the University doesn't tell you, and many many more. Some guides advocate for the abolition of the university and view all institutions as inherently violent, while other guides seek merely to democratize the university's governing structure. The few parameters that almost all disorientation guides do seem to fall within are that they present information and ideas that incoming students would not receive from university and its directed and sanctioned orientations, and they attempt to stimulate a continuous education process of reflection and action amongst their student body.**

**To create a theoretical framework and engage deeply with the academic underpinnings of the Disorientation movements, I took two distinct approaches to my research Firstly, I found that engagement with the academic field of Critical University Studies or C.U.S was a crucial launching point for undertaking this work from an informed theoretical perspective. The field is symbolized by an 'oppositional stance' to the university and a focus on "the ways in which current practices serve power or wealth and contribute to injustice or inequality. What was Particularly actionable for the purposes of a Disorientation Guide project are the challenges CUS presents to the supposed neutral and apolitical stance of the University, the assumed benevolent relationship between University and student, and the arguments that JEFFREY WILLIAMS, a paradigmatic CUS scholar,**

**makes, which is that: “Higher education is an instrument of its social structure, reinforcing class discrimination rather than alleviating it” and that the university is a “quintessential corporation”, indelibly a function of private property, existing to serve not the public but the will of the trustees” making the university a breeding ground for the institutionalization and implementation of capitalist oppression.**

**Conversely, Wendy Brown and Ivan Illich recognize the ascendancy of the Neoliberal model of the University as a private investment and continuation of capitalist methodology as a core component of C.U.S. For ILLICH, indoctrination into the values of consumerism makes the University incapable of yielding for students the joy of knowing something to one’s own satisfaction or exclusively for one’s own benefit while Brown is more concerned with the way that class interests and trajectories are calcified and entrenched by higher education. The University is thus accessible only to people with the time, mobility, and privileges that make them incredibly likely to have already been deeply initiated into consumer society and thus destined to reproduce a consumer society no matter what materials they encounter in university. The field of Critical University studies illuminates the importance of creating a Disorientation Guide that is a form of education presenting a challenge to the political order and social system which is built upon institutional learning. My second approach was looking at Historical instances of student resistance to the university, which I argue is born out of the fact that students have**

historically been politically disenfranchised and entirely removed from academic decision making as it pertains to academic leadership. The University is instead controlled by non-academic and non-indigenous interests, and students resisting the university or petitioning it for reforms are really requesting a redistribution of wealth and power from the University and its Board of Trustees. Student resistance, then, should have as a core objective the goal of exposing the undemocratic inner workings of the University, scrutinizing the ways in which power is concentrated and exercised, and mustering up the basis for, as the authors of a Disorientation Guide adjacent pamphlet titled 'Who Rules Columbia' put it: the "seizure and redistribution of property to re-channel it into the service of human needs."

Additionally, I drew from the 1962 Students for a Democratic Society's Port Huron statement to argue that a key component of student resistance is 'disillusionment or disorientation, but also that a concurrent component is the belief that their *is* "an alternative to the present, that something *can* be done to change circumstances in the school". Thus, the the impetus for creating a Disorientation Guide is derived, in equal measure, from a profound sense of disillusionment with the world and with the disenfranchisement inherent to being a student, and also from a sincere search and yearning for democratic alternatives to the present and a reimagining of fundamental social and political conditions. The next two episodes are an effort to reconcile this materialist critique of the university with an ideological alternative to

**its present conditions by seeking to both indict the University of Puget Sound as enacting a colonial project while recognizing the legacy and continuation of activist and anti-racist work that has already sought to present a challenge to the University since its inception. Early on, I had hoped to create a distributable Disorientation Guide that received contributions from a diverse array of people affiliated with UPS, and that was led by a coalition of student activists and student organizations on campus. I envisioned a guide that would serve as a student resource for engagement and activism on campus, presenting a critical perspective towards the University of Puget Sound. While circumstances conspired to make that unfeasible this semester, I hope that the following interviews illuminate the blistering potential for Disorientation work at the University of Puget Sound, and that my research can prove to be even a little bit useful as a resource or educational tool for future generations of UPS students.**

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## **EPISODE 2:**

**Rachel: My name is Rachel Greiner. I am a white queer part settler...and I'm an alumni from UPS, I graduated in 2018.**

**Eli: Awesome and I know you mentioned when we were corresponding over email that you did an oral history project and photograph archive while you were at the school so if you wouldn't mind touching on that or sharing what your experience with that was like?**

**Rachel: Yeah, so actually probably it makes sense to kinda start with my sophomore year I was part of, I helped cofound Incite Newsroom, um, which was sort of an activist publication on campus and we published a couple, like, pamphlet things, and we were founded because we saw all this activism going on and we just wanted to make sure people knew what was going on and just to provide support and context and just be sort of hype people for the people who were doing a lot of activism.**

**Eli: (The Documentation and Historiography at the University of Puget Sound archival project, which was created by Nakisha Renee Jones and Daniel Akamine, is a really good resource for researching an era of Puget Sound activism that was particularly active from 2014-2016 The archive looks a timeline of student activism during those years, and also provides an overview of the Black Student Union and its events calendar. Another section gives an overview of C.A.I.R - the Coalition**

**Against Injustice and Racism, its complete 2008 list of demands, and details how it originated from people of color, who felt alienated and unsafe on campus, speaking out publicly about experiencing racism at UPS. There are also two trail articles that provided some coverage of the movement and a comparison with the demands of C.A.I.R in 2008 to the demands made by Advocates for Institutional Change in 2016, with a description of how the university responded to both sets of demands.)**

**Rachel: So we published some articles and published other people in our stuff and then we would just hand it out all over campus. We found a printer and fundraised and we would just hand out papers all over campus and hang them up and then they'd get taken down and we'd hang them back up. It was very exciting, it was fun.**

**ELI: (Both Incite Newsroom Pamphlets are accessible through Collins Memorial Library by navigating to the Incite Newsroom tab under the Documentation and Historiography of Student Activism at the university of Puget Sound. The first issue identifies Incite Newsroom as a “group of students taking seriously the University of Puget Sound’s social and economic injustices through their theoretical elaboration and documentation” and expresses their intention to update the campus on live events in order to "incite further the goal of liberation.” It also contains a section called “three things we wish we knew when we started organizing” and provides updates about activist organizations on campus. The second issue’s theme is critiquing how the University institutionalizes whiteness and class hierarchy**

through its exclusionary practices and provides a critique of how UPS contributes to the hegemony of whiteness. Contributions include an indictment of the Passages Orientation program for having a glaring lack of diversity, a discussion of increased securitization defined by ‘white space’ and the university’s segregation from surrounding Tacoma communities and people. The Incite Newsroom facebook page hasn’t posted since August of 2017, but I highly recommend scrolling through their posts on the Facebook page @incitenewsroom to see some of their reporting on activism, as well as some of the pictures, videos and livestreams that Rachel mentioned.)

Rachel: But I felt like I really wanted to record things that had happened because my senior year I could look around and felt like stuff that had happened like only two years ago people had no idea. Um, it was just gone, it felt like it had been totally erased. So it felt really important to have those records. And, like all research projects, I had all these grand visions and then you know as you do it, you’re like “I’m only one human” and then you have to scale it down. Um and it still was a crazy amount of work. So, I got in touch with Nakisha and she was sort of the advisor for the project where I was like I just need someone to like, you know, talk through things, and a couple other people, Chanel Chelloway sort of helped me conceptualize an oral history project where we were going to talk to people and I archived all the photos I took. And so they live on a digital archive, but I’ll get to

that in a minute. So I talked to activists who had been around when I was doing stuff with Incite Newsroom primarily so it was kinda like my generation of activists. And I did a presentation at the Race and Pedagogy Community Partners Forum and then the other big feedback I got, like I got a lot of support, people were super nice, but the big thing was alumni, especially people who were part of the founding BSU groups, that sorta thing, were kind of like “when is it our turn? When are you gonna tell our stories?” And I was like “I graduate in two months, BYE!” So, you know, there’s always more work to be done. So it was really people that I knew and some people that I had done work with and some people who just knew each other from campus. And so we sat down and did oral histories, which was great, it was a lot of work.

**ELI:** I definitely have some questions about how that work enabled you to understand the university differently, or in other ways that hadn’t been obvious in earlier years at the University.

**RACHEL:** Yeah, yeah I mean so I was interviewing people about things that I had been at, right like protests that I had been at and sometimes I was sort of involved in organizing, I was never like a leadership position, but they’d be like “someone go get signs” and I’d be like “Ok, here’s a sign.” So I was sort of at these things, but I wasn’t like in leadership or like in the planning rooms sort of things...so a lot of what I got out of the oral histories was learning about, I mean oral histories are a really good way to learn about somebody’s interior life if they want to tell you that,

sometimes they don't, but um, like people's emotional processes and sort of what inspires them. So it was mostly I learned a lot about the activists, but specifically about the University, I think I learned about, some of the stuff I was like shocked about, but I think that's cause it was like a white lady being shocked. Like some of the stuff people talked about, like "Oh this Trustee was like super racist to me" and I would be like "Wow that's horrifying." So I learned a lot about the interpersonal toll of doing activism at a liberal arts campus, specifically, because everything is hyper personal, you know everybody, you know it's not just the President doing something, it's also like, in one person's case she was organizing this protest and she also worked for the president, like she was his front desk person or something, and like she got Christmas presents from him every year and then after this happened it was like, super awkward, like she had to kind of navigate that relationship. You know, she had like run this protest against his policies. So I learned a lot about the interpersonal cost, which I also had kind of expected to, because, how do I put this, my junior year the activism, like AIC, Advocates for Institutional Change, sort of dissolved for a lot of reasons but one of them was the way that the University like pitted people against each other. And, so I'm 25 now, I'm not that much older than when I was in school but I'm at a different university now and there's all this intergenerational organizing, but at UPS, it was very, when I was there it was very like, sometimes you have 18 and 19 year olds going up against this huge institution and you have all of these tenured adult professors who are critiquing basically

children. I mean college students aren't children but you just don't have that much life experience at that point. Um, and so I just learned a lot from talking to people about you know, just the impacts of it and how people were really on their own doing things. And, um, just how crazy that is, that people had to do that. Um, I'm not sure if I really answered your question.

ELI: I was just gonna say that that's, um, I think kinda what you were saying about how to sort of, critique the university while also being a part of it, or a beneficiary of it, or like a student within it, that that's a kind of unique experience at liberal arts colleges and um, the knowing everybody and having personal relationships with people, so I was just wondering how you personally balanced that, I mean, sort of having a critical viewpoint. Or how now, that you're removed from the University, maybe some things appear different.

RACHEL: Yeah, I mean so now I'm at University of Hawaii, which is a much bigger institution, right, like its huge. And I mean people do a lot of critique there, I know liberal arts definitely get a reputation for being very critical but I think state universities deserve that title even more so. But, now that I'm separated from it, I think it was unconscionable, it was just like no conscience, lack of conscience, that adults would tell like 18 year olds, like "You're doing things wrong" and not offer support. Um, cause there were some great professors, obviously, who were wonderful and really came through but also, like navigating, like being in those really vulnerable positions themselves and then having to also, like, go to bat for

students, and then the way that other professors, even professors, I mean, who claimed to be super liberal, would not support people or they'd be like "Oh I would support you if only you did this, this way" and it's like this is the first time someone done the thing. I don't know. But I mean also people put together amazing protests that like adults would be proud of too, like its not like people were incompetent, it was that we just had so little support and it was really not good.

ELI: I guess, like, another question is if you had sort of any advice for current students, like how to move through the university and maybe how to, like, garner support from people and how to make alliances. Yeah, what do you think students should know or should go into college knowing?

RACHEL: I think its really important to know your history, like what you're doing with this project, um, my sophomore year we went, and I knew that these pictures existed because I had heard about it, I think in Professor Livingston's *Narratives of Race* class, but I'm not sure, that could be wrong, but I like knew that there were records of minstrel shows in some of the yearbooks and a friend of mine and I went into the library and we found those and um, there was something about seeing that history and like, touching it, that I think is really important to do, and to know like where people, like what's worked and what hasn't worked.

ELI: So, Collins Library does have a LibGuide that provides resources, books, articles and films on blackface and minstrel shows, with a tab dedicated to

documenting Blackface in Tacoma and on Puget Sound's campus specifically, There you can find photographs and information about the the 1947 minstrel show 'Gentleman be Seated' and the 1949 minstrel show 'Sho Nuff.' The photographs are deeply upsetting, but Rachel's absolutely right that it is crucial to know our history, and the photos are a powerful reminder of where our University has been, as well as a stark representation of what institutional anti-blackness actually looks like.

Rachel: Cause I know like, at UPS, there was AIC, right, um when I was there, but then 4 years, or maybe it was 8 years, before that, there was, I think CAIR, yeah I would check that I don't think that's the right name...

ELI: That is the right name, CAIR or C.A.I.R. stands for Coalition against Injustice and Racism.

Rachel: But, there's the other organization and, after we had written the AIC demands, like we found these demands that had been written 8 years before and they were almost identical. And the ways that CAIR fell apart are almost identical to the way that AIC fell apart. And I think that's really important for students to know, like what's worked and what hasn't worked, because the institution, like, is gonna play the long game with you. They can afford to wait and they have all the experience in the world, um, and they know that you don't have that and they know

that your time is limited. Like they're just gonna waste as much of your time as possible and so it's really important to know your history, um. I think, I mean for strategic purposes but then also just for like how to be a good person purpose. Like you need to know like what land you're walking on and, like, what happened and yeah, it's really important.

**ELI: Just quickly, the 2008 demands from the CAIR and the 2015 demands from or A.I.C. or 'ACE' can both be found online through that same archival project, which, again, is called Documentation and Historiography of Student Activism at the University of Puget Sound. The CARE demands attempt to address a culture and environment of negativity and adversity against 'diversity and racial inclusion' on campus and demands include required diversity training, more administration and faculty of color, and more recruitment of students of color from local communities. The AIC Demands claim that UPS is not providing sufficient institutional support for current students from historically marginalized backgrounds, and demands that the university do better as it pertains to issues of race, identity and culture on campus. Some of the 12 demands include the creation of a cultural center that is larger than the Student Diversity Center, and again demands that the university seek out students from underrepresented communities and for diversity training for the greater campus community. The 2020 demands can be found publicly on the official Instagram of the Associated Students of the University of Puget Sound:**

**@asups.tacoma. The post with the demands is from July 2017, and it discusses “the administrations dismantling of ‘diversity work and faculty demands regarding equity work’.” It also includes the 2 faculty demands - first is replacing the interim chief diversity officer with a person who has demonstrated leadership and expertise doing diversity and equity work on campus through a more collaborative appointment process, and second is that the national search for a new vice president of diversity and inclusion be paused and that the appointment should instead be Professor Dexter Gordon.**

**Eli: What do you think stands out, um, in the sort of legacy of anti-racist activism at Puget Sound? Like when you were sort of looking through the University’s archives, did you see anything that sort of informed or contextualized any of what was going on when you were at the University?**

**Rachel: Yeah, I mean, I think the University likes to say “Oh we’re starting on this conversation” and they say that all the time. And they would say that in my 4 years at UPS, they said that my freshman year and they said it my senior year. And all the people around me were like “Yeah! We’re starting the conversation.” It was like, “what”; that didn’t make sense to me. Um, and I think the moment when I was like “Oh Wow,’ was, we were doing this student research in the archives and we learned about how UPS used to be, like a...the word that I had heard was ‘commuter school’ but that’s not right, I think it might have been a community college.**

**ELI: There will be more information on Puget Sound's history as a commuter school and connection with the local community in the next interview.**

**Rachel: But it was much more, like, connected to the community and the racial diversity statistics have gone down, not up, you know like, so seeing that happen, where somebody made an intentional choice and then now likes to say "Oh we're making things better" but, like, they were good and then something happened, or better than they were now. Um, and so I think that's an important thing to note, is like this narrative of progress is bullshit. Um, It's not what's happening. Like people are making important gains and like building off each other and like that's really real and there's a long legacy of activism at UPS. Um, but that like progress isn't actually a useful narrative, it's a really harmful one. Um, yeah. And also like it's sort of gaslight-y too. It implies that if we work really hard things will change, but people have been working hard for a really long time. And so it's more than just that.**

**Eli: Do you think there is anything that you wish you had known about the university or about being a college student at the very beginning of your college career? Or things you know now that, um, are worth sharing with people who are maybe just starting out?**

**Rachel: Yeah, I would love, so the oral history project, um, we ran into some, I mean it was sort of framed, I guess, similarly to your Disorientation Guide, that like**

hopefully this is a useful resource in the archives. I'm just gonna go on a side rant and then you gotta remind me your question and I'll come back.

Eli: Go for it, go for it.

Rachel: And so, like, the oral histories function differently than the website, which, see I'm still sorta figuring out how to get the oral histories in to the University. Um, because, so in order for things to be, um, donated to an archive, usually but not always the policy is that you need to sign away, like, all of your rights to the object, which includes copyright. Which archives have done that for a long time and there's a whole colonial history there that we don't need to get into. But it's a thing. Um, and there's, like, a lack of desire for the archives to have accountability to the source material or to the people who created the source material. Um, and that's not a critique of UPS, that's just, like, how it is. And that's slowly been changing, and there are some really great progressive archives that have changed their policies. But that was a big problem my senior year, when I was like "Ok these, like, recordings are done and I would like to donate them to you, um, but you want me to sign away all these students' rights to their oral histories" and I really want it to be that the students, and alumni at this point we're all alumni, who share the information need to have ownership of it. And need to be able to say like "I want to take this out of the archive." Or "I want to leave it here." Well, yeah it's really really important, to me, to have that relationship be maintained and that people, like, can retain ownership of their oral histories. Especially because some people, like, it was

a little risky for some people, like stuff that they shared. Um, it was super critical and like, could be potentially used against them. I mean, I don't think it could be used against them but, like you never know, and, I mean, this is probably also advice for your Disorientation Guide, but you want to be really respectful of the positions you put people in. Um, especially when you come from a place of privilege and you're working with people who have less privilege than you. You need to be thinking about, like how this could possibly impact them negatively. Um, and be really talking to people about "what do you want to do with your information?" Because they'll see risks that you can't, you know. Um, and so that was something that I really fought for with this archive, um and ultimately, I graduated and stuff kinda got put on hold and really, with this archive stuff right now, um, like the next step would be to actually do some fundraising and, like get money because they need to be transcribed so they can be more accessible. Because right now they're just, sort of, audio files on my computer that constantly crashes. Um, and so there needs to be all this work done to them to make them accessible. Um, yeah. So you know, it's hard, because I want them in the University, and I want them to be useful, like educational tools that people can access when they go to the archives and maybe teachers can use them as teaching tools. Um, but it's tricky, because, like, in order to pass this stuff down you need money to do it. I don't know. And when you finish your projects, like that's something that you're probably already thinking about. But, like, how are you gonna make them continually be accessible? Because you

need funds to do that. And...sometimes you can get those from the University. But you also need people to make them accessible, like Adreanna put us in touch. Like, you need allies who are going to promote this material. Because it's not enough for it to just exist. It will disappear really quickly. Um, yeah. So that's...something I would think about a lot. I'd also think about, like, consultation. Like I really tried to set up, with my project, like really be talking with people I was interviewing about where they wanted their information to go. And then also I had, like, people who had signed up to be like "I'm going to just like, when you need to talk through ideas I'm gonna be there to talk through them with you and give you advice and make it like a communal thing."

Eli: In the room with you?

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, even though like, I did almost all of the actual work because I was just the person who was available to do it. Um, and also I just didn't plan very well to get other people to be a part of it. Like it's just really hard to do that sometimes. Um, so I was willing to do all the work but I still wanted to make sure that I had people to hold me accountable while I was doing that work. Yeah, I like what you said "people in the room with you." And then also maybe some training about how you identify agendas, of people, like why are people saying certain things and...being really critical of the information you get. Um, and I think also, this probably you can't put into a Disorientation Guide, but, um, this is a problem in all activism spaces that people are figuring out, because like, we're recreating other

structures of domination that we have to kind of address, like of helping people to understand, because when you do activism, like at UPS you may not have a lot of support, it can be really easy to get into a sort of silo or group think sort of situation. Um, and so some sort of information about, like, how you navigate that and how you seek out mentors outside of the group, like, how to find those people who are going to support you. Because that can be really hard at UPS. So that you're never like, this, like, because we had a lot of problems with people being like "my way or the highway" and then it was like "well, your way's wrong, what do I do now?" Um, which happens at a small school. And so you need to be able to navigate those situations gracefully. Um, so, some sort of information about that seems important. I don't know if you can put that into your guide, so maybe it's just food for thought.

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## **EPISODE 3:**

**Skylar: I'm Skylar Marston-Biehl. I use She and They pronouns. I am an alum of the University. I graduate in 2008 and then I returned for 2 years starting in 2009/10 and 10/11 I worked as a social justice coordinator on campus in the department of Spirituality Service and Social Justice, a department that doesn't exist in that form anymore, but that's where I was at the time. And then returned in '14 for the Assistant Director in Civic Engagement position, which morphed yet again into Associate Director for Civic Engagement and Leadership, so that is my working title at this time.**

**Eli: Awesome, and first question is what is your experience with creating student publications or being involved in student publications in the past at the University? And any advice you might have for students who are gearing up to start their own publications or do some of that work?**

**Skylar: Great, yes. My experience is focused on when I was working out of the Yellow House, so the Center for Intercultural and Civic Engagement. We started 2 publications during my time there. One was the CICE magazine and that was an attempt to help lift up voices of the folks that we were working with and for out of the center that are narratives that weren't always as heard on campus or not heard as loudly. And so the goal with the magazine was to capture those narratives and**

share them with the campus as well as reflect on different things that were going on on campus or in the world and finally promote our various events. So that magazine sort of captured a range of things that we were doing.

**ELI:** For reference, 8 issues of the CICE magazine can be found online through Sound Ideas, Puget Sound's Institutional Repository, with a caption that reads: "In these pages you will find periodic discussions of campus and world events, resources to educate and engage yourself on issues of social justice, recipes and tips for feeding yourself on a budget, recommendations for some of our favorite Tacoma hang-outs, and ways you can join in."

**Skylar:** At the same time I was working with a student, Lou Lief, who was very interested in creating a zine and so the first iteration of that zine they were working on my staff team and we allocated student staff hours for them to pursue that work. The first one was designed to help students wrestle with a more nuanced understanding of Tacoma and to try to pop the bubble between campus and the broader community. And so the first one focused a lot on Tacoma history. And then subsequent iterations of the zine have tackled a variety of different things. [] did one on immigration, and specific to the detention center in town. It has really ranged. And after that first year of Lou working on the zine, we wanted it to be sort of complementary to CICE magazine but also to be a little bit more student-run than

CICE Magazine. CICE magazine was predominantly written by students, my communication and promotions team played a big role in that. I served to do a lot of the layout and editing, um, but because it was an official magazine of our office, um, we wanted the Zine to have a little bit more freedom to do what the students wanted it to do. Um, and so after that first year Lou and I had a conversation about what would it look like for this to become a club. And, so Lou approached ASUPS, got enough people who were interested in working on the zine, and it did become an ASUPS club. Um, that's probably the important pieces there, initially at least. So those are the two publications that I've helped work on, and once it became a club Lou stayed on my staff team and so we would talk about it during meetings, during one-on-ones, but we really tried to have it be its own stand alone thing. So it got launched from the office and had the support of my office, and the student hours, um, but we really wanted it to become its own entity. And so did sort of send it off after the first year of it being part of the office.

Eli: And so after it started how long did it kind of, continue to exist for and then is there any reason or way that it ended or what happened there?

Skylar: Great, yeah, it ran for 3 years, um, so Lou started it that first year out of the office and then when it became a club...it did really well. Lou studied abroad, though, and I do think it lost a little bit of momentum when Lou was abroad and then came back after they were abroad and finished really strong, um, and then COVID hit. And so...I don't think it's been picked up again this year. Lou

**graduated and many of the folks who were working to make it happen graduated and then with COVID there just wasn't a real opportunity for a solid handoff.**

**ELI: All four issues of the zine, which is called ENGAGE A SOCIAL JUSTICE ZINE, are in the University's library, physically archived in the Library Zine collection, which is open for research. The first iteration is called "Not my president" and from 2017. A copy of the 2nd issue of the zine, titled "History in Tacoma", is available on Facebook @upsengage, and contains sections on Tacoma's history with indigenous peoples, the Tacoma Method, Japanese internment, the Northwest Detention Center and resources for advocacy and activist groups in Tacoma centered around a variety of identity based issues and other causes. ENGAGE's Facebook states its purpose as providing a platform where members of the UPS community can speak on their experiences and be heard, while also addressing the current political climate and looking at the broader picture. The third issue is called "Consequences of Colonialism" and the fourth, and most recent issue is called "This Land is not yours to Tread". It was published in 2018. I highly recommend getting your hands on these documents, they're a really radical and good student-published resource, and probably the closest thing to a Disorientation Guide that I've found in the UPS archives.**

**Eli: Got it. Um, and earlier you were taking a little bit about the earliest iteration of it that dealt a little bit with Tacoma and, uh, sort of an alternative understanding of Tacoma and would you mind at all sort of illuminating what those goals were and maybe what that research about Tacoma brought up and um, what students that attend the University of Puget Sound should know about Tacoma as a city?**

**Skylar: Yes, um, I don't want to speak to the goals, because they were Lou's goals and so I don't want to assume that I totally know what they were hoping for. But I can talk about some of the content. That first issue in particular covered a lot of pieces of Tacoma history that I think we talk about more now as an institution, um, but when Lou was starting the magazine you had to be in the right classes or the right pocket of friend groups to really encounter some of those histories. So it included things on Japanese-American incarceration, it included pieces on the Tacoma Method (which was related to the Chinese Expulsion Act in 1855, I believe) and the way that Tacoma kicked out all of the Chinese people living and working in the city, and, um that became known as the Tacoma Method. I believe that that issue also talked a little bit about redlining but that might have been the second issue that jumped into redlining. So it was a lot of these pieces that I think people, especially if you're coming from out of state or even if you're coming from some place in Washington that isn't familiar with Tacoma, there are a lot of myths and or stories that get passed down from, Gosh, generations of students that sort of reinforce a particular narrative about the city, that I would argue is a very white narrative and**

is also an old narrative that doesn't necessarily ring true to the city today. Um, and so I think some of the goals, again I don't want to speak for Lou, but thinking back to the early conversations, some of those goals were to try to debunk some of those stereotypes and or the myths that had been passed down as well as challenge students to understand the complicated history that Tacoma has had, especially in that first issue regarding race and ethnicity.

Eli: Yeah, so I'm just curious if in doing this sort of work about the history of Tacoma, anything came up with how the University had worked with the city in the past, or you know, this could be your own view, how the University's history is sort of interlocked with the history of the city or if those histories, you know, the University's history should be complicated?

Skylar: Great, yes. I don't believe that some of what I will share now came up in that iteration of research, however this is ongoing research for the work of civic engagement that I do on campus. Um, and so yeah, one of the things that is interesting to me is, I just actually recently did a presentation on the history of civic engagement in higher education and then the second part of that presentation was focused on Puget Sound and so I spent time going back through old copies of the Maroon and the Trail. The Maroon was an early iteration of the Trail, um, and it is really interesting to see the ways that the narrative has not changed much, even when Puget Sound was a regional school that had many Tacoma students, um, there was still this sense that once students got to campus their lives revolved around

campus and that that created sort of a vacuum or a divide between the city and the institution. And that's looked different over the years, it's looked differently over the years, but for example, we used to have an Urban Studies Program and I want to say in 1971, I think it was, the Urban Studies Program started the Community Involvement & Action Center. And the goals of that center are not unlike goals that my office would have today: around getting students off campus, getting them invested in the city in meaningful ways, not just doing random volunteering, but building relationships with people in town that are meaningful and deeper and contribute mutually, back and forth, to everyone's lived experience in the city of Tacoma in positive ways. Um, there's a interesting list of I want to say 10 goals that they outlined and I don't have it in front of me, I apologize, but I can find it for you. Um, but it was really interesting to see that some of those same conversations, incarceration was on that list and now we have FEPPS, the student group supporting FEPPS, right, that that is still a conversation, that is still work that is happening and needs to happen.

**ELI:** That list of 10 goals outlined by the Community Involvement and Action Center that Skylar mentioned, was published in the September 17, 1971 issue of the Puget Sound trail, under the headline "What Has UPS EVER DONE FOR THIS COMMUNITY?" The issue can be found online through the Sound Ideas Trail tab of the University's historical collections. Written by the Community Involvement

and Action Center or CIAC staff, the article describes how (CIAC), this newly formed arm of Urban Studies will "initiate special education, training, and action programs directed at the university structure and at the wider Tacoma area" and writes that "CIAC has grown from a feeling that runs deep in Urban Studies and in other campus programs, that educational structures have isolated themselves too much from the thoughts, issues, movements and feelings of people not on campus." The article describes CIAC's intentions to break down the confining walls between U.P.S. and Tacoma people and also includes demands such as setting up cooperative child care for university and non-university parents and organizing with local Welfare Rights Organizations.

Skylar: I would also say that, um, a big divide happened between the city and the institution when we sold the law school to Seattle University. We used to have a law school. We also used to have campus buildings in various parts of the city, so there were campus buildings downtown and, as we've become more and more of a residential community, that has, to some extent, reinforced this withdrawn approach that—I mean, college is a time when folks are doing a lot of identity development, and so on the one hand, developmentally, it makes sense that folks are really focused in the place that they are. I just would hope that we would expand that sense of place to include the whole city, that it's not just the campus, and that learning and development happens in a much broader place in ways that are, again, mutually

beneficial to everyone. But when we sold the law school and once we moved more and more to a residential community, that divide between the city and the campus continued to grow. And that's not even touching on the socioeconomic pieces or the racial pieces as well.

Eli: So, um, I guess sort of in terms of maybe pivoting towards the legacy of activism at the University of Puget Sound, um, looking out, sort of now, in this moment, in this year and also looking in the archives and looking in the past, is there anything that stands out to you in the history of, um, anti-racist or activist work at the university? Including, you know, resisting the University itself or decisions that the University has made?

Skylar: Yeah, great. Um, I realize you probably don't have time to do this, but if you were ever to do a follow-up, I would highly encourage meeting with the Race and Pedagogy Institute. When it comes to anti-racist work on campus, they have been the leaders since they were founded. Um, and African-American studies people with them. Um, They are still the folks that I would look to for much of my own learning. Um, And that is an ongoing process that they have been the leaders, in my time associated with Puget Sound for sure, and continue to be. Um, the other piece that I would say is that activism has very much been something that has been led by students. When I was a student, there was an organization, just as I was graduating, called C.A.I.R.

**ELI: Again, that's CAIR - or the Coalition Against Injustice and Racism .**

**Skylar (cont.): They created a list of requests and demands for the institution, predominantly around racial equity, and there a lot of conversations. Again, I graduated right at the beginning of that getting going and so I missed, sort of, their hey-day in the following year of really working on those things. Um, but fast-forward to 2014, I believe, there was the walk-out. And the walk-out was organized by a group of students called the Advocates for Institutional Change. And those students put in countless hours, uh, working on not only a list of demands but also accompanying narratives that illuminated why the demands were being requested. Why those needs were being pressed. And they staged a walkout that had, I wanna say, upwards of 350 people attend. They gathered on the steps of Jones Hall and not only shared their list of demands, but students shared the narratives as well to really help people try to understand that this wasn't just some willy-nilly set of requests, but that these were personal. That these were students' lives being impacted by the systems of the University. And so that group, following the walk-out, the institution responded to bring students in to various committees and attempt to work with the students to address those demands. The Social Justice Center and Student Diversity Center buildings that we have are direct results of that walk-out and those demands. At the time, we had one very very tiny little house and...we had outgrown it and it**

had been outgrown for years. Um, it did not meet the needs of the clubs that met there and so the new spaces came out of those demands and a process of figuring out how to get the funding together, how to convert those spaces into spaces for the clubs to meet. That's one example. Now, I would also suggest that some of those demands and the ways that they were met—um, the ways that they were written allowed for something like the Student Diversity Center and Social Justice Center to be created to meet the demands, without necessarily the underlying systemic causes for the demands to be fully addressed. And I would say that that's where the ongoing work is. And students continue to organize, um, to try to really get the institution to work on the systemic, institutional levels. Which, obviously, is a much bigger task and won't happen overnight, but requires all of us, I think, to do the hard work of examining our positionality, the ways our identity shape how we move through the world and how we experience the institution. One example is, as a white queer identifying student during my time here, Puget Sound was a place that *did* allow me to grow into my identity and really wrestle with hard things. And it wasn't until after I graduated that I was working with students of color who were also queer identifying for me to really understand just how different my experience had been, as a white queer student, from my queer students of color peers. And that is a perfect example of how, I think, students with dominant identities and administrators with dominant identities can move in the space in a way that means we don't see and do not understand the ways that these spaces are impacting

colleagues and students of color, or students from lower socio-economics, disabled students, all of the various ways that shape how our identities can enter spaces and experience them.

Eli: Absolutely. If you wouldn't mind, or if you're able to sort of name some of those ongoing, um, battles or ongoing, sort of, ways in which some of the systemic work is happening or what those demands are and how they're being made.

Skylar: Um, well one thing that has come in the last number of years has been MIBU, the Multi-Identity Based Union, which pulls together students from all of the identity based clubs to be organizing and advocating for their needs. Not only building community across the diverse set of clubs, but also, again, to be a space to come together and support each other but also push for what they need. Um, and I can't speak to specific demands, right now, I have not seen specific demands and I don't know if that's something that's necessarily happening in the moment, but I do know that that is a space where students are wrestling with these things and are asking questions about "How do we push for what we need in a broader scale than just feeling like we have this one club meeting once a week where actually we feel like we belong." Um, other ways that I think this work is happening, um, for example, in the Division of Student Affairs, where my office is housed, we are in a process right now, in the beginnings of a process right now, of doing a bunch of identity work and digging into some hard conversations about identity with the end goal of doing that internal work first so that we can look at our policies and

procedures with an eye to equity, and with an eye to how our identities shape how we understand those policies and what does that mean that we're not seeing and how might they need to change to truly be inclusive. We're in the very beginning stages of that but that's something that Dr. Baker has been, um, leading us through this past semester, to really try to say like "That's great that we can talk about these things." I think in the Pacific Northwest we throw around a lot of social justice jargon, but if that jargon doesn't impact how we live our lives and how we approach our work, then it's empty. Um, and so that would be another place where I would see some of this work trying to happen.

**ELI: Dr. Baker is Dr. Uchenna Baker, the University's Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. She joined the University of Puget Sound in July of 2018.**

**Skylar: Um, granted again, it's in the beginning stages and we'll see what happens with that. But it's the first time in my time that it's been approached in this way, at an institutional level for the entire division, um that wasn't just, sort of, one-off trainings but really with an eye towards policy and procedures that reinforce systems of oppression and how do we actually undo those.**

**Eli: Wow, um, yeah so maybe just to finish or to round it out, if there's anything that you feel inclined to add, or that maybe you think should be covered or is pertinent to**

the project in some way. I'll just maybe leave it open and see if anything, um, really surfaces.

**Skylar:** First,...I'm excited to hear what comes of all of this because I think the student voice is incredibly important for pushing institutions. I mean, we've seen that throughout history....I'm sure when you met with Adreanna she probably talked about some of the Vietnam war protests and some of those things.

**ELI:** According to Adriana, the Winter 1970 and Spring 1971 issues of the *Alumnus*, which was the precursor alumni magazine/newsletter to *Arches*, is a great place to look to see how the university was representing, or not representing, student activism on campus with regard to the Vietnam War.

**Skylar:** The other piece that I was actually just learning about yesterday was part of the history of Greek Letter organizations, actually started as activist organizations pushing back against very strict and limited curriculum of institutions. And I had no idea about that, right. I mean I think the narrative of Greek letter organizations over time has definitely been one that is of exclusion. Yet I think if those organizations really dug in to some of their early history, that might empower them to take some different steps today as I had no clue that they started as activist organizations pushing back against their institutions. Um, including the snowball, um, protest that happened where a bunch— I apologize, I just learned this

yesterday so it's not as engrained in my head, but there was a snowball protest where folks who were part of Greek Letter Organizations um, ended up rolling gigantic snowballs in front of one of the administration buildings in protest for—I mean at the time you could get kicked out of school for being part of one of the organizations and they were all focused on debating issues of the day and things that were not part of a classical education. Right, and so they staged this protest and sort of locked administrators in their buildings via these ginormous snowballs to protest the inability for the curriculum to modernize and include, um the issues of the day that were challenging people at the time, social issues in particular. No clue, had no idea. So I'm hopeful that a project like yours would inspire, um, more folks to just really take a hard critical look and think about the ways that we're each part of these systems and what we can do about them. And the fact that the student voice is often the place where change is really forced to happen.

**ELI:** Now, ideally, any disorientation process would consist of a much greater number of interviews like these, with carefully and deliberately asked questions and with the systemic approach to many of the issues surrounding the University that Skylar discussed. I contend that more Disorientation work could build intergenerational coalitions, locate more allies in and outside the campus community, and make sure that Puget Sound students feel just as supported in doing activism as they do in doing school. And to briefly touch on a couple of points

that Rachel made: First: it's well taken that being cognizant of one's own positionality and privileges is incredibly important in doing archival work, which is why I want to affirm that both Skylar and Rachel consented to having their opinions and interviews distributed and published. And second, with regard to accessibility, I can't stop thinking about what Rachel said about the fleetingness of institutional memory and how important it is to document ongoing movements. The quote was "It's not enough for it to just exist, it will disappear really quickly." With regard to accessibility, I hope that my project will one day benefit from being translated and transcribed so that it can reach both an audio-impaired audience and population who does not speak English as a first language, So, yes, there is always more work to be done. I also want to mention, that there was considerable overlap between what Skylar and Rachel had to say about the history of the school and the familiarity of those narratives of resistance. It reminded me of how strikingly similar some of the language is in the Disorientation Guides that have been created over the years. I think it speaks to the pervasiveness of some of these issues, as well as the ongoing efforts of students to affect change and of universities to resist it with their familiar tactics of playing the long game, delaying protests, and obstructing and opposing direct actions. Finally, it should be clear that this project and these interviews are in no way meant to be authoritative or even complete, as some of my favorite disorientation guides are open sourced and explicitly acknowledge their own incompleteness and the necessity that future students will edit, add, fill in gaps, pick

**up where so much of the past work has left off, and have the space and ability to confront future issues and conflicts. In fact, there are really significant areas for future research that I regret not being able to cover more thoroughly in this guide: including the University's historical relationship with Christianity and with the Methodist Church, a detailed look into the history and current composition of the University's Board of Trustees, and some research and discussion of the University's founding and early land acquisition strategies. There's also always more ground to cover with regard to the University's relationship with Tacoma - I'm thinking of a particularly salient quote from the second issue of the Incite Newsletter that is critical of Puget Sound's orientation program: "These programs involve students for a short period, they fail to teach them about the consequences of the school's presence, and they don't set a foundation for students to be permanently involved in the community." A quote like that belongs in a disorientation guide. In closing, I want to thank you so for listening, and I want to give particular thanks to Rachel Greiner and Skylar Biehl for their insight and for their contributions to this project. I'd also like to thank Adriana Flores, my classmates in PG 440 this past semester, the generations of Puget Sound student-activists that have come before me, and Professor Alisa Kessel.**