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Sandra De Alcuaz Oral History Interview

Sandra de Alcuaz
Raymond College

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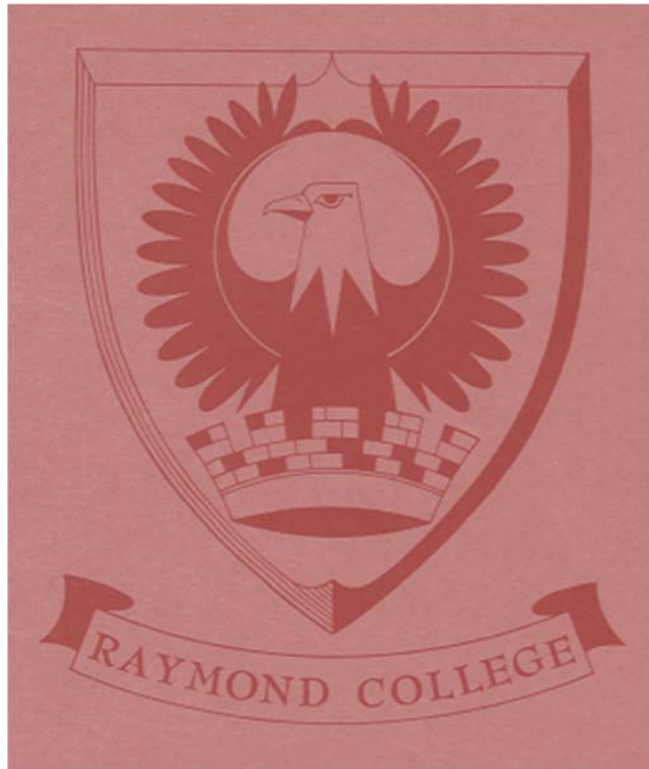
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RAYMOND COLLEGE PROJECT ORAL HISTORIES
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Sandra De Alcuaz (1970-1973)
Raymond College Student

April 27, 2023

By Lorenzo Spaccarelli

Transcription by Lorenzo Spaccarelli University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Sandra de Alcuaz Interview

Transcribed by: Lorenzo Spaccarelli

Lorenzo Spaccarelli: Okay. Hello, my name is Lorenzo Spaccarelli and today I'm going to be interviewing Sandra de Alcuaz. How do you say...

Sandra de Alcuaz: Correct.

Spaccarelli: Alcuaz. And today is April 27th, 2023. And I am conducting this interview from my apartment on Pacific's Stockton campus. Can you state your name for the record and tell us where you're Zooming in from?

De Alcuaz: Sure. I'm Sandra de Alcuaz, Gersich de Alcuaz, and I'm Zooming in from my home, which actually is in Modesto, California.

Spaccarelli: Nice. So to begin, what years did you attend Raymond College?

De Alcuaz: 1970 through '73.

Spaccarelli: Okay. And then what was behind your choice in attending Raymond College?

De Alcuaz: Well, I was looking for a good, firm liberal arts education and I was intrigued. I mean, I looked at Reed and I looked at Santa Cruz and I looked at several different colleges that I thought would offer a good, well-rounded liberal arts education. And, you know, so, Raymond happened to be one of them, but it was interesting because I just, I didn't really realize about it, but I had looked at UOP and then somebody said, doesn't UOP have a liberal arts program? I said, they do. And anyway, that's, that's how I kind of happened upon Raymond College.

Spaccarelli: Nice. And where did you grow up?

De Alcuaz: I grew up in the Bay area. Most of the time I was in Saratoga, which is near San Jose.

Spaccarelli: Okay. So it's nearby.

De Alcuaz: Yeah. Real close.

Spaccarelli: Okay. And then I had a follow-up question. Did you get a chance to visit Raymond before you committed? Do you remember?

De Alcuaz: I can't remember if I did or didn't. I don't think I did. I don't think I did.

Spaccarelli: Okay. So then what were your first impressions when you arrived?

De Alcuaz: I was surprised how small and compact the college was, how personal in nature. Yeah, but I really, I liked it.

Spaccarelli: Good, good, good. And so when you were talking about first impressions, what do you think when you- your first class, what were your thoughts when you just started getting into it?

De Alcuaz: Well, I realized it was demanding, but very personal. And I liked the fact that, you know, the only real kind of lecture course we had was Introduction to the Modern World, which... that was the only kind of big class. Most of our classes were small in nature, like 25 students, seminar learning. But the Introduction to the Modern World was a bigger class because all of the students were in it. Anybody who was in Raymond the first year, we had to be in that class. So it was a great way to introduce us to what Raymond was trying to do. But I did realize I was going to have a lot of reading and there was no way in the seminar structure that you were not going to be obvious if you hadn't done the reading.
(Laughs)

Spaccarelli: Exactly. I've heard that from a bunch of alums that there was nowhere to hide if they hadn't done the reading.

De Alcuaz: Yeah, it was better not to go to class. (Chuckles) So then you didn't feel shamed.

Spaccarelli: That's fair. And then what about the social scene? What was the social scene like when you got there? What do you remember?

De Alcuaz: Well, it was very different. You know, actually, one of the impressions I had was that my father is a very conservative person. I was very glad he never came to the school until I graduated, because I think if he came before I graduated, he would have pulled me out and not- he supported my undergrad education. I think he wouldn't have allowed me to stay there because, you know, we had, we were in the halls, the halls were separated by floors, but not- in terms of sexes, but not I mean, you know, there were a male floor and a female floor and a couple of our dorms and you know, it was pretty loose, very loose. You know, that was the early '70s. And you know, it was clear that there was marijuana around and, you know, a lot of other things. So it was very different, very liberal scene from that standpoint, living. And also, you know, the professors were around- by that point, you know, early on, they had lived in the dorms. But at that point, there were just a couple of the professors left in the dorms, most of them had moved out of the dorms, but they were still very, very accessible. They were, they were always around, always available.

Spaccarelli: Nice. Okay. And then getting more into it here. Were there any memorable events that stood out to you during your time at Raymond? Memorable high tables to the extent that those were still present? Charity events, anything like that?

De Alcuaz: Well, I do remember, you know, the freshman retreat was very memorable. We went into the mountains, the Redwoods, we were there for several days, and really got to know each other, you know, quite well, real early on, got to know a lot of the professors. So that was something that really sticks into my mind. My graduation sticks into my mind because it wasn't conventional at all. You know, we had our own little graduation and a couple- we did have, we didn't have the, still the formal high tables that they had in the earlier classes, but we did have guest speakers. And you know, I remember a couple of them were famous, but I frankly don't remember who they were. You know, I know that George McGovern came, I remember that. And one of the Black activists (Angela Davis) came to campus, to Raymond. And I can't remember who it was, but I do remember it was one of the Black activists who came, and, um, to a high table, but we didn't have the extent of high tables that they had in the early classes.

Spaccarelli: Interesting. Okay. Can you tell me a bit more about graduation? Not many alums have talked about how graduation was unique.

De Alcuaz: Well, it was just, you know, it was more like our professors sending us off, you know, doing personalized, you know, memories to all of us, you know, and, you know, it was more like a going out party or something. I don't know. It was, it was just different. It wasn't like real formal. We didn't have a formal graduation, you know, we didn't get in gowns, walk down the aisle or any of that kind of stuff. It was very different. Yeah. And I remember too, as I mentioned, my parents were very conservative. So they came to my graduation, my father didn't approve at all, but that was okay. I was graduating.

Spaccarelli: (Chuckles)

De Alcuaz: So yeah, it was, yeah, just different, very different.

Spaccarelli: That's fair. Okay. Yeah, let's move on. Okay. Do you remember any controversies during your time at Raymond? Between the cluster colleges and the university, between administrators, et cetera, any, anything you can think of?

De Alcuaz: Yeah, there was always antagonistic feelings between the rest of the university and Raymond. And I had, I developed- one of the professors, the econ professor, Mike Wagner, and I became personal good friends. In fact, we maintained our friendship throughout his life. And my life, he had a major influence on me. His wife, Pat was a sociologist who taught at the COP. So I took some classes from her. And so that was somewhat unique. Not a lot of students at Raymond took classes at COP or vice versa. Other than maybe some of the people going into, thinking that they were going to go into the medical field, they might take chemistry and things like that at COP. But yeah, there was a lot of animosity. I don't know. It was just an undercurrent. It was like we were the hippies, so to speak, radicals. And, you know, and, and some of the things, you know, like we didn't really, we had a close, it was kind of like our community was the whole school, Raymond, and it was small enough to be an individualized community. So whereas other people at COP looked highly, some of them, to their

sororities and fraternities, we thought that was kind of weird, you know, and childish or what have you, you know. And we saw Raymond as our community. And we had closer ties to some of the other closer colleges like Callison and Covell. We felt more affinity. In fact, we used to talk about the eucalyptus curtain. I don't know if that's come up. But...

Spaccarelli: Many times.

De Alcuaz: Yeah, so anyway, that. And the school, you know, was going through kind of an identity crisis because the earlier classes had had very, very structured program. And the faculty and, and student body was trying to see if we felt- what we felt like. We were trying to keep some of that structure, but not all of it. And so we were kind of trying to experiment with what we thought we needed to do.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, I'm going to ask in just a moment, a couple more questions, because I know you were at that turning point in the educational philosophy of Raymond, so to speak right there. But going back a step. So about that disconnect that you felt between Raymond and the college, you felt- you said that there was this disconnect between the two. And you mentioned Callison and Covell and that you felt closer, that Raymond felt closer to them. Can you elaborate on why you felt more of a sense of community with those specific colleges, other than just proximity?

De Alcuaz: I think because they seem to have a, I don't know, more of an intellectual mission, and specific goal in mind, where, I don't know, the impression always was that, I don't know, they were more intellectually challenged and motivated than maybe some of the students at COP. That was just our overall feeling.

Spaccarelli: And did you feel that way when you took classes in the college? Did it feel different in terms of commitment to education? Did the classes feel more difficult at Raymond? How did that work?

De Alcuaz: Yeah, they were more difficult. I mean, I did really well in the classes I took at COP. But I just think we were more intellectually challenged. I mean, you know, that we had developed through the way we were taught in the small kind of dialogue, how to probe and ask questions more and to be more probing and, you know...

Spaccarelli: Inquisitive?

De Alcuaz: Yeah, yeah, inquisitive. Yeah. Whereas you got the feeling, in my COP classes, I got the feeling like the students were just trying to kind of take in what the professor had to say, as opposed to really think about it and challenge it.

Spaccarelli: OK. Yeah, that makes sense. Interesting. OK, and now getting more into that question of the educational philosophy. So first off, that's just I realized that you were right at this time, so I added a couple more tidbits that I want to talk about. But first off, what are you just your general thoughts on the educational style of the Raymond teaching philosophy? How did it work for you?

De Alcuaz: How did it work? It worked great.

Spaccarelli: For you.

De Alcuaz: For me? It worked great. I mean, I thought, you know, I thought that I mean, I really love the Introduction to the Modern World. I thought it framed what we were going to be doing at Raymond. It opened, you know, I got a much greater sense of how the different disciplines interacted because that course was put on by a cadre of professors and you saw the different disciplines of work. And there was a challenge in terms of, you know, what education was all about, to go out into the world as an educated person and have impact, you know, in a variety of ways. I just think it set a framework. And then in terms of that, you learned how to be a better problem solver and how to, on your own, integrate material. You know, how to be challenged. And the other thing was, it's hard to express to other people, but I really helped my daughter. My daughter, you know, when- she's very bright and when she went to school, I encouraged her to try to find a liberal arts education program because I just felt it was so important in terms of making you develop your ability to problem solve and integrate information. And the other thing is, Raymond taught me how to write, really write what I thought, my ideas. You know, so it did. And it gave me a foundation in sciences I never would have had because I really wasn't, didn't have an affinity for science. But I mean, we had to really, you know, we had to take physics and chemistry and, you know, have statistics and all of those things. So I think I got a real good foundation and appreciation for the different disciplines, intellectual disciplines. And I don't think otherwise that would have happened.

Spaccarelli: Sounds great. So I'm wanting to dive a little bit more into the Intro to the Modern World class because everybody talks about this class and I've, especially in the earlier years. So I'm- why was it so important? Why was it, to you, so foundational to your experience?

De Alcuaz: They structured it in such a way that you really got a feeling for, you know, what education was about what, you know, that you had a responsibility in the modern world as an educate- you would have a responsibility as an educated person to have an impact and you could have an impact, that you had a responsibility to have an understanding and a dialogue across disciplines. You know, work with a diversity of intellectual frameworks and people and the professors took it so seriously, you know, that they really, you know, they really impressed you. I mean, it really was a very passionate, you know, present overview class. And, and one of the things that's hard for people who haven't been through a good foundational liberal arts program is people don't understand that you can get depth, even though you're, you're seeking breadth. If you understand what I'm saying, I mean, they found ways to, to pick the, you know, source materials, the original books that would really clearly present, you know, the thesis from an economics viewpoint or from a statistical viewpoint or from a biological viewpoint or from a sociologic- So they would really work hard on, you know, presenting things that were the core of their disciplines. So you could really see the value in the basis for what that was trying to explain, be it in literature- literature, or, you know, economics or what have you. And yeah, it was just, it's kind of like it

laid out what we're trying to get at in the course of this education. Now, while you're here with us for three to four years, you know, what we want, hope that you, you know, strive for.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. That makes sense. Okay. Where was I going with my next... So you're saying the Intro to the Modern World sort of like, so to speak, aimed your education, like, like said, okay, this is what we're going to be talking about and just launched it forward. Is that what you're saying? Or...

De Alcuaz: Well, it's kind of like they presented to you different challenges in terms of the modern world and how education in- from various intellectual frameworks respond to those challenges that are out there. And that, that you have a responsibility to respond to those challenges that you're just not, you know, there was much less focus. I mean, I it's, it's interesting because you didn't really, I mean, even though people wanted to achieve something, I mean, there was very less focus on material gain or vocational objectives. It was more, how are you going to function as a responsible person in this society?

Spaccarelli: Yeah. As a citizen.

De Alcuaz: Yeah, exactly. As an educated citizen.

Spaccarelli: Okay. And then my understanding from the research that I've done is that a program developed probably during your time called the embryo program. I don't know if you recall it.

De Alcuaz: No.

Spaccarelli: You don't recall the embryo. Okay. Well then we don't have to worry about that. My understanding, my understanding was that it was like a replacement for the introduction to the modern world as a new sort of basic- basis for intro like, you know, like beginning courses. But if you don't remember anything called the embryo program, then we don't have to worry about that.

De Alcuaz: No, I don't remember that at all. No, we had the Introduction to the Modern World. And what I do know is that there was more of a structure prior to our classes in terms of, like, what you had to take. It was in, kind of a structured way. And that wasn't, we had much more latitude in terms of what we could take. I mean, we had to have so many classes from every discipline, but we weren't required to take this before that or that before this or blah, blah, blah. And I think there was more of that in the classes before us.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. That fits with what I know as well, so.

De Alcuaz: Yeah. But I think we were kind of in the cusp. I think a lot of things changed drastically after our classes. I'm glad we were where we were. I don't know. We were kind of middle. Everybody was kind of figuring it out. How much of this should we keep? How much should we change? How much, you know, and they decided to keep what I think was really important.

Spaccarelli: Okay, cool. So moving on, who are the individuals at Raymond that were most memorable to you and why? And these can be professors, these can be administrators, these can be other students, anyone.

De Alcuaz: Well, there were several professors that were very, you know, as I mentioned, Mike Wagner had a tremendous impact on me. A couple of the other professors, John Smith, who taught literature and also John Williams, even Cliff Wagner, Neil Lark. I mean, the professors were really very open and, you know, I developed a real close bond with Mike Wagner, but I also, you know, felt, you know, Andy Keys, who was an administrator. He was just really helpful person. Yeah, I just think that they were all really, you know, there to help you and challenge you and support you. And it was pretty amazing. So, you know, several of those people had an impact on me, a great deal of impact. And then there were a few classmates too. You know, I haven't maintained contact with many of them. In fact, unfortunately, my two main contacts, those people have passed away tragically. So that's been really sad because that was something, yeah, that's sad. Anyway...

Spaccarelli: That's exactly why I'm doing these interviews. So I can make sure to preserve what I can.

De Alcuaz: So, yeah. Anyway, there were several classmates that, you know, and even those who were, you know, I think that if I saw some of the people, you know, that I knew back then, I mean, I just felt like we were all experiencing something that was very meaningful to all of us at the time.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. Interesting. Okay. So moving on, what issues were you involved in that stood out in your mind as important to the growth and development, both of the school generally and of yourself while you were there at Raymond?

De Alcuaz: Well I became much more aware of political issues. You know, like who was running for office and civil rights issues. And yeah, those were the, oh, environmental issues. It's the first time I started to think about environmental things, you know, it's kind of, was on the cusp of all of that. So, yeah, those things were, you know, important. But I also had a, you know, a drive to do this well, but to move on too. So I wanted to, I really appreciated the way you could model at the time, you could really use your, you know, we had a semester and then we had a break, you know, like for a month and a half in between the two semesters and you could go and do projects and stuff. And, you know, I went to Chicago and worked on a project and that was really, it was related to healthcare. It had to do with women's issues. So health planning and things like that. So I really, I liked that you could do those kinds of things. And also while I was there, I started for the school, a snack shop for the school because we didn't have anywhere and the other cafeteria closed too soon. And we were all talking, staying up at night and stuff. So I got the student body to give me a loan and started organized a little snack shop for the Raymond community in the basement of one of the dorms.

Spaccarelli: Nice. What was the name?

De Alcuaz: I forget what we called it. I think it was just the Raymond something or other, I don't know, snack shop, whatever. But yeah, I went out and explored how to get, you know, sodas cheap. And, you know, I've always had that, see, I came from a small family business and we were made to work and stuff. So I had this whole entrepreneurial thing about, you know, if you really need something, go out and do it. And so, you know, I helped start this little, organized some students. I mean, we got the Raymond student body to give us a little loan so we could do our first inventory. But then after that, you know, we charged just enough to pay the students who worked in the store and, you know, set up a shift and blah, blah, blah, because everybody wanted to get munchies at night and there was no other way to do it. Most of us didn't have cars, you know, so...

Spaccarelli: Okay. Yeah, makes sense. Okay. Where else was I going with my thought there... About women's issues. This was a time in the, just the history of the US as a whole where women's issues were coming more to the forefront and feminism and that sort of dialogue was becoming really on the scene. And did it change your perspective while you were there? I mean, how did you, how did you interact with feminism and how did Raymond as a whole interact with feminism?

De Alcuaz: Well, I thought Raymond was very, you know, Raymond, for the most part, didn't have patriarchal kinds of approaches to things. And, you know, it was very unique for the society at the time. So there was never any question that the women could do whatever men were going to do. You know, I mean, it was not like- that was the other thing that seemed different between COP and Raymond was that it was like the women there were like getting an education and going to get married. And we weren't. (Laughs) You know, it's like, our prerogative, our purpose was not to find a man but to get a good education. So yeah, it was different. I remember what's interesting is because after Raymond, I went to graduate school, and I remember realizing that a lot of people in my graduate courses didn't think the same about women that the people, that the Raymond professors did. I got the undertones of, why are you here? You know, it was very, very... Yeah, so it was different. Yeah. So...

Spaccarelli: That's not great.

De Alcuaz: No, it's not great. So, yeah, women's issues were really beginning to be important thing and, and being recognized and, you know, allowing, you know, encouraging women to be in different professional spheres where they weren't before. And you know, and I ended up going into healthcare management. And it was really interesting because I had a number of experiences where I was the only young woman in situations and I remember very clearly how the only women that were generally respected were nurses in management powers because it's somehow, they had, you know, they had a force because everybody knew without good nursing care in the healthcare industry, you'd be dead. So there was some deference to the women in administrative positions in nursing, but when it came to management, it was like, you didn't know what you're talking about, you know, as a woman.

Spaccarelli: That's unfortunate.

De Alcuaz: Yeah. So yeah, so it was, yeah, I, you know, I didn't feel that way. So it's kind of like Raymond didn't prepare me for some of the outside world in that regard.

Spaccarelli: Regarding environmental issues, I think you're the first person to mention environmentalism impacted you during your time at Raymond. Do you want to elaborate any more on that?

De Alcuaz: Well, I just think it came to mind, you know, there was just certain readings and stuff that made me think, you know, that we need to start paying attention to our environment, you know, and I hadn't really ever thought about it before I came to Raymond. And I think it was just some of the readings. I mean, there wasn't a specific course or anything, but some of the things that were brought out in the readings that we had made me start to think, you know, we need to start to address some of these issues.

Spaccarelli: Okay. Yeah. Sounds good. Okay. And then this next question, this next question is, doesn't, I'm going to rephrase it a little bit because it's not quite the same, but how important were the speakers that you heard in the discussion that you had around civil rights, feminism, community activism, environmentalism?

De Alcuaz: Oh, I think that, you know, we had a, you know, I mean, I, I don't think I would have had an appreciation for civil rights, you know, racial issues and politics the way I do if I hadn't gone to Raymond. I think it was kind of, it just made it like something that I became aware of, much more aware of than I ever was. And, and made me want to be active in those fears, fears, you know? And the whole notion too, of being active, you know, like that you can make a difference and you should make a difference, you know, that you should be an activist, you know, that you shouldn't just sit back and worry about how much money you're going to make and your family and all of those things, that you have a responsibility to worry about these societal issues.

Spaccarelli: And sorry, you might've said it, but I feel like I might've missed it. Did you yourself engage in any sort of protests or anything like that during your time at Raymond?

De Alcuaz: Personally? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I went to San Francisco, engaged in a deal, civil rights action.

Spaccarelli: Nice, nice.

De Alcuaz: And also against, that was the Cambodian, you know, war stuff was going on.

Spaccarelli: Yeah, yeah.

De Alcuaz: So that was a big deal too.

Spaccarelli: I'm sure. Yeah. No, we haven't even talked about the Vietnam war. I mean, do you have anything to say on how that informed your time at Raymond?

De Alcuaz: (Laughs) Yeah, that was a big deal. And, you know, and impacted... Yeah. I remember, you know, the draft. I mean, you know, that was a huge deal. I mean, you know, the lottery, all of that stuff, it was crazy. And, you know, when I went to graduate school, almost all the, I would say 80% of the young men I went to graduate school with were on the GI bill and they had been to Vietnam.

Spaccarelli: Wow.

De Alcuaz: Yeah. It was crazy. Some of those experiences, those, yeah, it was nuts. Yeah, I can't believe- so you haven't talked about that before in these interviews?

Spaccarelli: No, I have because people mention it, but I wasn't, I didn't, I wasn't, I forgot to ask it specifically today. But yeah, no, people mention it. I know some people talked about how after they graduated, they tried to figure out ways to avoid getting drafted for the...

De Alcuaz: Yeah, because see what, you know, we had my group, it was lottery and stuff. God, I remember that. That was just so, you know, that your future was decided by, you know, your birthday. I mean, it was like crazy. It was nuts.

Spaccarelli: Yeah.

De Alcuaz: It's really crazy.

Spaccarelli: I'm assuming Raymond as a whole at this point was pretty mobilized, anti-war.

De Alcuaz: Yeah, pretty much. (Chuckles) Yeah, I would say so.

Spaccarelli: That's fair. Okay. I think that's everything I wanted to talk about with that question, unless you have more to say on social issues?

De Alcuaz: No, I think that's enough. But I do really think, you know, that, you know, I wonder sometimes if, you know, and I came from a very conservative and kind of sheltered background. I went to private schools in my, you know, high school and things like that. And I really think, and privileged, I really think that Raymond helped open my eyes to a lot of these things and changed my direction.

Spaccarelli: That's fair. And actually, I just suddenly remembered this. So I want to go back a step. The intro to the modern world class, some people who have talked about it, who have- came from rural backgrounds or, you know, they weren't like, they didn't come from liberal backgrounds, more conservative backgrounds. So the intro to the modern world class really shook them up. Did it feel that way to you? Did it feel...

De Alcuaz: Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Because it really, yeah, it really challenged a lot of what I thought. And I mean, and pointed out things I had never really thought about at all, you know, that were kind of like, whoa, where was I? (Laughs)

Spaccarelli: (Chuckles)

De Alcuaz: Where am I? (Laughs)

Spaccarelli: Okay, moving on here, we went back. Let's keep going forward. Has Raymond College met your expectations as an institution and as an education and why or why not?

De Alcuaz: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I think it just, I mean, there were just several things. I mean, I really do think it helped me be able to integrate information better, to figure out a strategy in terms of solving problems, to become more aware and curious. I think it helped make me a lifelong learner. It also made me more aware of other disciplines, you know, that I think is critical to be able to, you know, speak in more of a team aspect with, you know, different people from different backgrounds, the validity of focusing on social issues and community orientation. I think there's way too much individual emphasis in our society. And I think Raymond had a real approach to, you know, the community.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. Giving back to the community.

De Alcuaz: Yeah, giving back to the community, right.

Spaccarelli: Okay. Well, that goes right into our next question. How did Raymond give back to the community in terms of the Stockton community? How did that work?

De Alcuaz: Well, you know, I know a lot of the students were out in the community doing different things. I mean, for example, like when I was a student, I went and volunteered at a health planning agency. That's how I got interested in some of the women in health care issues and things like that. I know that other students were involved in things that were going on. So you know, specifically, I don't remember some of the things so but I know that people, students were out and doing things in our community.

Spaccarelli: Yeah. Did you? I mean, other... Never mind. I was wondering if there was anything more that you did that you were aware of specifically besides the Women's Health Clinic?

De Alcuaz: Not specifically. No.

Spaccarelli: Okay. And then this is a big one. And this is how your education, how did you, has your education at Raymond influenced your career or life choices? We've already touched on this a little bit. But if you have anything more to say?

De Alcuaz: Well, like I said, I think it made me more. Well, I think first of all, it opened some horizons. I mean, I think that I felt like I could do, you know, whatever I wanted to do. I mean, you know, like if I set out a plan, I think as a woman, it gave me more confidence in terms of what I could do. I mean, I think that's really true. I think it made me as a person much more aware of societal issues, and, and wanting to be responsive and active and issues and giving back to the community, to my community, to my society. I think it prepared me better... I mean, I know that I learned how to verbalize my thoughts better. I learned how to write better, for sure. That's one thing, really taught me how to write. You know, how to express my thoughts in a written way, clearly. And I never think I would have achieved that if I hadn't gone to Raymond, because I was forced to, you know. And I don't know what else. Um...

Spaccarelli: Well, one thing I've heard, you mentioned that you went to grad school, right? One thing I've heard is from a lot of Raymond students is they got to grad school and they felt like it was easy after Raymond.

De Alcuaz: Yeah.

Spaccarelli: (Chuckles) You felt the same way?

De Alcuaz: Yeah. Yeah.

Spaccarelli: Okay.

De Alcuaz: It was- I mean, you weren't, yeah. Yeah. I mean, I could have skipped several classes. I mean, you know, it was very, yeah, it was a lot easier, I thought. In some respects, in some respects, you know, I had a dual degree in the school of public health and school of business. So the one thing was in some of the technical things, it was harder. Because, for example, in the school of business, it was assumed that you had already gone through all these introductory business rote courses. So when I got into accounting, you know, I mean, I was lost for the first, you know, three weeks or so. But I knew what to do. I mean, I knew how to get somebody to help me, you know. So that, you know, that was a lot. But in other things, like other classes, yeah, it was, it was easier. It really was easier.

Spaccarelli: Okay. Cool. Well, that's everything I have. So now is my turn over to you. And I asked, you know, what have we not covered in this interview that you still want to discuss?

De Alcuaz: Well, one thing, you know, I think that there's a lot of validity to a liberal arts education. A lot of validity to it. And I all- and I think that what's- that our educational system is turned way too vocational, like the whole point, and I know why. I mean, it's so expensive now to go to school and everything that everybody, it's like, you know, return on investment. But you know, with AI, and Google searches, and all of these other things, in terms of information retrieval, you know, the computer age has got that down for us. Okay? So what you really need is people that know how to think and solve problems. And I think liberal arts allows you to do that a lot better than vocational training. And, and I

think there's too much of vocational training emphasis in, in what our current educational, higher educational institutions are looking at. So that's what my spiel for the day is.

Spaccarelli: No, that's, you know, I understand that completely, as someone studying history, in a department of like, 15 students. I'm aware. And every year, it feels like it gets smaller.

De Alcuaz: Right? Yeah. And you know, and that's the thing, like history can teach us so much, you know, and people are like, you know, downplaying a lot of these disciplines. And it's like, you know, they have so much to offer for us. Because, I mean, I really fully do believe, you know, I mean, I have, you know, sisters who are nurses, and, you know, a lot, the training that you need for that, I mean, you really develop on the job, you know, and stuff. And, you know, I question, you know, why everyone doesn't have a basis, you know, kind of an Introduction to the Modern World foundation. And, and I know that COP tried to do that for a while. I don't know if they're doing that anymore. But they saw the validity to the Introduction to the Modern World. And they had some for a time, they know they were trying to do that with some of the students, but in any event, and my daughter, you know, she found a- within the school, within Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame in Indiana, they have a very rigorous liberal arts program. And that's what she got into. And she really appreciates that she did, you know, so then she ended up going on and getting her master's, but yeah, there was a lot of validity to all that. Yeah.

Spaccarelli: Um, and then one other thing that I just thought of, you didn't have letter grades, right? You only had term letters. How did that work for you? My understanding is that it deemphasized the grade specifically, and the pursuit of that, you know, percentage of accomplishments and more of a, like, getting out what you put in kind of thing.

De Alcuaz: Right. Yeah, you got a real response from the professor in terms of, you know, how they felt you had grown through the class and your achievement in that. Yeah. So yeah, and it became more of personal, your own personal attempt to, you know, grow and learn in the class as opposed to being compared to how you were doing against other people. You know, it was more how you were doing.

Spaccarelli: Right. That makes sense.

De Alcuaz: Yeah. But yeah, it was interesting when it came to go to graduate school. (Chuckles)

Spaccarelli: (Chuckles) What do you do with these? These aren't grades. What's their GPA?

De Alcuaz: Yeah, it made it very interesting. So we all relied on, heavily relied on the scoring from, you know, for the MCATs or, you know, graduate school, VANS and stuff like that. So it showed that we knew a lot of stuff. Yeah. There's a lot of the schools, especially the bigger schools because see, I went to University of Washington and that's a huge school. And yeah, I remember all the gyrations I had to go through to get accepted, you know, how they were going to evaluate my lack of grades.

Spaccarelli: Okay. Well, I'm done. I have nothing more to say. So if you're, if you don't, unless you have anything else, I'm going to end the interview here.

De Alcuaz: No, that's fine.

Spaccarelli: Okay. I'll do that. Let me stop recording.