

RUDOLF STEINER COLLEGE
Towards a University of the Spirit

August 15, 2009

Rudolf Steiner College grew out of a commitment to make Rudolf Steiner's life work available to an emerging constituency in search of alternative paradigms for cultural renewal. Although not published until many years later and therefore unknown to the founding circle, Steiner had remarked in 1919 that although it would take many years, it would be good to have an anthroposophical university.¹ As an aspiring *university of the spirit*, the College strives to realize this ideal. It serves as a life center, schooling perception, insight and imagination and providing transformative, healing education in a society too often marked by materialism and self-interest.

Inspired in a dramatic Whitsun-like moment on February 22, 1976 (George Washington's Birthday) in the bi-centennial year of the founding of the United States of America. It opened for classes on Michaelmas, September 29th of that year under the name *The Sacramento Center for Anthroposophical Studies*. The founding group, including Nancy Poer, Carl and Christina Stegmann, Franklin Kane and Betty Kane (Staley), began offering courses in general anthroposophical studies and Waldorf Education. Of particular interest was the question of the spiritual destiny of America, carried strongly by Carl Stegmann.

René and Merlyn Querido joined these colleagues in 1977, bringing an emphasis on Waldorf Teacher Education, the Arts and a strong vision for the future. René envisioned studies at the College as a transformation of the seven liberal arts for modern times, and as a manifestation of the School of Spiritual Science – with foundation studies in anthroposophy and inner development at the center (similar to the General Section), and the various other programs corresponding to the Sections of the School.

Later this vision of a transformative education based on anthroposophical core studies would find its way, through discussion and approvals at all levels of the College, into the RSC Mission Statement as a commitment to provide programs that:

- Awaken independent thinking and healthy judgment about the deepest issues of human life,
- School powers of perception,
- Cultivate and enrich artistic faculties,
- Develop social sensitivity,
- Strengthen capacities for practical life.

Gayle Davis and Patrick Wakeford-Evans came as students in 1978, followed by Brian Gray in 1979. Ted Mahle and Arline and Clifford Monks also joined the community in 1981 and 1982. In the spring of 1979 the name "Rudolf Steiner College" was chosen for

1. Steiner, R. (1996). *Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School*. Ghent, New York: Anthroposophic Press.

the organization that had been created, which clarified the intention of the leadership to become a college, and more than a study center or teacher training institute. Several of our current faculty and staff members were present in what is now Emerson Hall at the dramatic moment when the name Rudolf Steiner College was announced. A large horizontal scroll had been prepared on which the new name had been inscribed. As it was unfurled and the new name sounded, a streak of lightning lit the room, followed by a crash of thunder.

Many colleagues, including Lyn Dickson and Claude Julien, arrived in the years directly following, providing with others a strong institutional memory and a through-line of intention that continues to the present day.

The growth of the College followed closely along the lines envisioned in these first few years. Approved by the State of California as a degree-granting college for post secondary education, the first programs were Foundation Studies, Teacher Education and a full time Arts Program. Gradually specialties in High School, Early Childhood, Remedial Education and Subject Teaching, as well as a program for Japanese students and Goethean Studies (later Consciousness Studies) were added.

The original imaginations have been implicit in every aspect of program development during the past thirty years. Over that time participants in envisioning sessions held in Council, Board and larger community meetings have articulated “build-outs” of the original intentions. Although Foundation Studies in Anthroposophy, Consciousness Studies, Waldorf Education and the Arts were the first programs to incarnate consistent with the School of Spiritual Science imagination, seeds representing other Sections of the School have been planted through conversations, collaborations, conferences and workshops. As the College pursues WASC accreditation, some of these seeds may be seen as precursors of the fully developed degree and certificate programs and academic departments of the future.

RSC Activities Reflecting the Sections of the School for Spiritual Science

General Section in Anthroposophy

Foundation studies in anthroposophy was initiated as a full-time program at the founding of RSC, with variations carried in various locations and embedded in multiple programs particularly by Brian Gray, but also by Betty Staley, and the entire RSC faculty. Dennis Klocek developed Consciousness Studies, a College exclusive, out of his Goethean Studies Program, the subject of which had been previously introduced by Friedemann Schwartzkopf.

Performing and Visual Arts

RSC is fortunate to have a full time Visual Arts faculty. In addition to Painting, Drawing and the History of Art and Architecture, we offer regular courses in Sculpture and Modeling. Ted Mahle and Patricia Dickson carry most of these classes.

RSC was a major player in introducing the Werbeck Singing work to America through Jurgen Schriefer. We continue to offer music classes and host the annual SANA conference out of this impulse. Gayle Davis, Carol Divan, Eva Cranstoun and Andrea Pronto have carried much of this work in music.

Drama and Speech work were inaugurated by Merlyn Querido in the early years, and further carried by James Anderson (drama) and Helen Lubin (speech).

We are graced to have two eurythmists on the faculty and to offer a full Four-Year Eurythmy training. Cynthia Hoven and Reg Down are joined on a regular basis by visiting master eurythmists, and we have hosted advanced continuing education conferences in eurythmy for several years.

Astronomy and Mathematics

Although the College has not fully developed the mathematical work, it is notable that Ernst Schuberth has been an important contributor to mathematical pedagogy on our three campuses and also in summer courses. RSC Press publishes some of his work. Community interest in the work of Frank Chester on Sacred Geometry is also an area for future exploration.

Work in Astronomy, Astrology and Astrosophy has been strongly represented at RSC for many years, first introduced by Willi Sucher, then carried for decades by Brian Gray and now anchored further with the addition of William Bento to the faculty.

Pedagogy/Education

Rudolf Steiner College is an internationally recognized leader in the field of Waldorf Education. In addition to traditional and innovative delivery models for the training of Early Childhood, Grades, and High School teachers, we offer training for Subject Teachers and Remedial Education. We provide continuing education, workshops, conferences and courses for teachers in Waldorf schools, public schools and charter schools, as well as for teachers of children at risk. We engage with other educators and educational institutions to further sound educational practices and engage the public on educational issues of the day. Carriers of the above work include Betty Staley, Patrick Wakeford-Evans, Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann, Irene Francois, Lauren Hickman, Ingun

Schneider, Bonnie River and many other faculty members. Arline Monks has been instrumental in our public school work and in championing the protection of childhood.

The College is currently pursuing WASC accreditation, and if successful will approach the California Commission on Teacher Credential and Licensing to explore the granting of state teaching credentials.

In addition to extensions of the education work, such as courses for teachers of children in the court system or other at-risk groups, newer developments include early childhood courses conducted in Spanish and parenting work with homeless mothers. Most recently, a renewal of traditional craftwork for use in therapeutic situations, as pioneered by Ruskin Mills and the Hiram Academy in England, has been introduced to enthusiastic conference participants.

Medical and Therapeutic Work

The anthroposophical medical work has been present for years at RSC. We have hosted PAAM (anthroposophical physicians) conferences and enjoyed the frequent visits and keynote addresses at February Conferences of Medical Section Head Michaela Glockler. In the 1990s, we joined the Goetheanum in sponsoring a Kolisko Conference on our campus with over 800 international participants. Eugen Kolisko, the first Waldorf School physician, was the first prominent anthroposophist to visit and speak in Sacramento decades ago, contributing to the beginning of anthroposophical activity in our area.

At nearly every envisioning meeting, the question of therapeutic work has been prominent – sometimes as an extension of artistic or pedagogical offerings. Various art therapies have been mentioned, and for a time, our Arts Program was a recognized prerequisite for Ann Stockton’s Therapeutic Painting Program in England. Cynthia Hoven is also a qualified curative eurythmist.

Rudolf Steiner College introduced Chiropnoetics to this country, bringing Dr. Alfred Bauer and Dr. Bruno Callegaro to the campus. Still today, Rudolf Steiner College Press remains the sole publisher of the introductory book on this subject in English.

Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann’s recent position in the Medical Section at the Goetheanum has also helped to maintain ties with this work.

Social Sciences

The Social Sciences have also been of interest in envisioning meetings for many years. The College administration strives to organize and conduct its affairs out of anthroposophical organizational principles, and the Council, Board and many staff members have studied governance models and organizational development literature that

represents research in this field. The Waldorf Administration Program, now in its sixth year, also draws heavily from this research.

For years we have spoken of the development of a counseling program and even trainings for those working in homes for children at risk. There have been various introductions to psychology and counseling and many current faculty members have background in these areas, including Betty Staley, Patricia Dickson, Dennis Klocek, Gayle Davis, and Bonnie River. William Bento holds a doctorate in Clinical Psychology. The new *Compassionate Community* course is a movement in this direction, and will help to ascertain community and nation-wide interest in facilitating, counseling and psychology.

Rudolf Steiner College Press, Rudolf Steiner College Bookstore, and Student Housing are all mission related services as well as economic enterprises.

Biodynamic Agriculture

The Rudolf Steiner College Raphael Garden has been a centerpiece of the campus for decades. Activities in this area have included a long-established garden apprentice training, a CSA (Community-supported Agriculture) program, frequent well-attended workshops on biodynamic agriculture, gardening and beekeeping, and most recently garden visits for school children. Harald Hoven, who attends annual Biodynamic sectional meetings in Dornach, and sits on the board of the Biodynamic Association, has nurtured this work for many years. David Basile has also become active in these areas.

Recent public interest in home and community gardens, sustainable agriculture, and biodynamic viticulture has spurred growth in this area.

Natural Science

Dennis Klocek has carried the work of phenomenology and Goethean observation for many years in his programs, workshops and lectures. Patrick Wakeford-Evans has a background in the biological sciences, and David Basile has also been developing a course in phenomenology. RSC has also hosted the *Sensible Science* work with Michael D'Aleo.

Belles Lettres

In many ways, this section of the School for Spiritual Science is the least developed. Fine literature, including poetry and storytelling, is taught in both Foundation Studies and Waldorf Teacher Education, with *Faust*, *Parzival* and American Literature as curriculum staples. Also, we have had visiting poets such as M.C. Richards and Paul Matthews on campus for readings and workshops.

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As previously mentioned, the areas detailed above correspond to the Sections of the School of Spiritual Science. The decisions taken in the 1970s and 1980s to become an anthroposophical college inaugurated a long incarnation process – that of embodying an esoteric mystery school in an exoteric form.

The teachings of the mystery schools of antiquity continued to inform humanity in two major directions. One path passed exoterically into the Platonic Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum to be reborn first through the School of Chartres (and the tradition of the seven liberal arts), and later through the scholastics, as the modern academic University. The second direction continued esoterically and more underground in movements such as the Rosicrucians and the various secret societies.

Rudolf Steiner College stands poised at the threshold of a new stage in the trajectory we set decades ago. As we pass through our thirty-third year and seek full academic standing among other universities through WASC accreditation, we bring our esoteric mystery tradition in an exoteric bodily form, re-uniting the two paths in the marketplace of public life.

As we continue to provide innovative, transformative and transpersonal education, taking our place among the traditional community of scholars brings us closer to realizing a goal in our Mission Statement, “to serve the broader educational community and bring Rudolf Steiner’s contributions into the dialogue on education and other issues of global concern”.

Growth at the College has always resulted from individual or group initiative, recognized and supported by the campus community and leadership as mission-resonate and viable. Possibilities for the future have been articulated in various envisioning sessions as well as planning team meetings for Program Development and Initiatives and Ventures. The activities identified and the possible directions expressed under the various Sectional enumerations above, represent my personal reflections on imaginations voiced by colleagues throughout the years in a variety of formal and informal settings.

Gayle Davis
President of Rudolf Steiner College