Visual Analysis
Campus Character

The campus gives an outward impression of a park with only occasional glimpses of buildings between trees. The major buildings are placed in a central, dense and introverted cluster surrounded by parking lots and landscaping. Landscape planting has predominantly darker foliage colors. Building walls have warm earth tones accented by dark bronze trim and gray roofing.

Built in the aftermath of the Vietnam War era student unrest of the 1960’s, the campus has a defensible character to the outside and a conspicuous absence of large exterior open spaces for students to gather.

The campus has an intimate core that can be very active and lively if not crowded due to its scale. The narrow and linear spaces between relatively tall buildings increase this. There are no expansive vistas that might otherwise provide scale relief. Sightlines are constantly interrupted by buildings and landscaping. There is no clear focus for the open space that a campus quad would provide.

Rather than having a continuous and expansive parking lot (shopping centers across Pacific Avenue), parking is sub-divided into smaller lots using elevated earth berms to preventing expansive views of parked cars.

Paving is either brick or concrete textured to resemble brick. The brick forms a building base from which the warm-toned walls extend. The buildings have a consistent and homogenous character with the same materials, finishes and architectural treatment used throughout the campus. It reflects that most of the campus was designed by one architectural team and constructed almost continuously from one end of the campus to the other.
Site Grid
The original architects planned the campus on a modular grid oriented parallel to Pacific Avenue. Major building dimensions were based on multiples of a 13’ module. The original construction drawings show a 2’-2” grid in the background with building structural frames and walls located on this grid. The grid is three-dimensional with floor levels located vertically on module. The grid extends from building to building in plan and elevation. Floor levels were intended to align in most instances.

Building Character
The buildings follow a vernacular rather than classical or eclectic approach. The original intent was said to be for the buildings to resemble a mining environment. The heavy wall texturing and prismatic building forms were intended to give the impression of an earth form, mine shaft or mining structures. The walls meet steep (6:12) sloping roofs at straight edges as the faces of a crystal or polyhedron meet. There are relatively few roof overhangs casting shadows to walls. There are no curvilinear or soft forms in the buildings. Instead the rectilinear buildings are placed in contrast to curving landscape forms. There are no plan diagonals to give further emphasis to the sloping roof forms. Although the building forms are complex, they are also monolithic with one building leading visually to the next.

The buildings are opaque with relatively small window openings. Outward facing entrance doors are solid without view panels, transoms or sidelights. The buildings express structural load-bearing wall masses as opposed to a structural frame with lightweight wall infill that is the construction actually used. Exterior walls are cement plaster over lightweight metal stud framing.

Fenestration is mostly transparent. Window glass is not heavily tinted or reflective from glass coatings.

Heavy timber is used in balcony railings and occasional trellises. Exposed wood has been protected with sheet metal flashing painted to match dark wood stain.

Metal building elements are often painted or anodized a bronze color.

The Central Plant is a good example of how the original campus design was adapted to later construction.