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LA ONDA CHICANA

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 4

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN MADISON

JULY 2000

CHICANA & CHICANO STUDIES



SACRED SIGN OF WAR

A TODA MADRE O

UN DESMADRE

LOS MECHISTAS
C/S

© C/S GRAFIKS

O
UN DESMADRE



LA ONDA
CHICANA

Is it even worth trying to explain the complexities of our language (calo), I don't know but we'll give it a try.

"A toda madre" means everything is going smoothly like the beauty or security of a mother's love. "O" means or, and "un desmadre" means total chaos by taking apart. So together "a toda madre or un desmadre" means either everything needs to progress smoothly or it needs to be taken down at any cost.

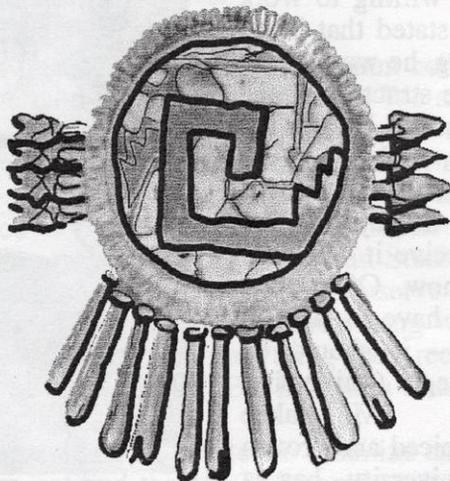
This is how the MEChistas feel about the Chicana/o Studies Program. We have sat on the curriculum committee and had to argue in order for the professors to use the term Chicana/o. And now Professor Medina, the new director, is teaching a class on Hispanics in literature. If these are the classes they are going to be teaching, why have Chicana/o Studies. But don't think we are going to easily give up what the Chicanas and Chicanos fought for so adamantly. This university, specifically the College of Letters and Science had a responsibility to this program and they have failed because of the insufficient knowledge about Chicana/os and their lack of interest in this population. The Chicana/o Studies program has had 15 directors since its' inception. Some of them have been graduate students. What other department or program is run by a graduate

CHICANA/O STUDIES DEPARTMENT
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETS WITH
DEAN CERTAIN

On Wednesday, May 3 five members of the Chicana/o Studies Department Organizing Committee, Ofelia Delgado, Daniel Gaytan, Marissa Lopez, Luciano Olviedo, and Deborah Vasquez met with Dean Philip Certain to discuss our demands for a Chicana/o Studies Department on the Madison campus of the University of Wisconsin. While Dean Certain was civil with us when the meeting began, it quickly became clear that he does not support a Chicana/o Studies department on this campus. Although he claims to be willing to work with us, his cynical comments at the May 3 meeting suggested quite the opposite.

The meeting began with a formal statement of our demands by Ofelia who graduated this May with a B.A. in both Sociology, and Behavioral Science and Law. In addition to her two degrees, she holds a certificate in Chicana/o Studies which, she explained to Dean Certain, is nearly worthless. Echoing the sentiments of many students on this campus, she told Dean Certain how the bulk of her knowledge of Chicana/o history and culture is self-taught, since the courses were insubstantial and did not have a focus. The courses are also offered so sporadically that the certificate is impossible to obtain in a timely manner, causing a decline in the number of candidates applying for the certificate. Ofelia explained how departmental status would alleviate these problems by hiring full-time professors, since the Chicana/o Studies Program has not been able to hire in three years.

Dean Certain took Ofelia's criticisms of the program seriously but expressed doubts as to whether departmental status was the optimal solution. Before elaborating on his concerns, however, Dean Certain spent awhile going through the bureaucratic process of establishing departments on campus, expressing doubt that any of the members of the Organizing Committee understood what was involved. He was aware of the history of the Chicana/o Studies Program and of the program's experiences in Letters and Science. He drew comparisons between other programs on campus, making sure to highlight the success of Women's Studies, which chooses to retain its status as a program rather than becoming a department. Dean Certain completely ignores the reality that Women's Studies functions at full capacity with many more classes available to students. He also ignores that Women's Studies is offering classes pertaining to women. Few classes on Chicana/os are



Continued from Page 1

being taught in the two or three classes offered through Chicana/o Studies. He also claimed that smaller departments suffer more hardship than larger ones.

This point about large vs. small departments allowed Dean Certain to slide into his idea of establishing an Ethnic Studies programs. The group contested this idea with the example of UC Berkeley, which follows just this paradigm and has suffered greatly because of it (for a detailed explanation of the conflict at Berkeley, see Third World Liberation Front's excellent web site at <http://www.aspenlix.com/twlf/index.htm>).

Nonetheless, Dean Certain continued to present Ethnic Studies as an answer to the concerns raised by both the group and him. But this solution would require the Afro-American Department to also be placed under this umbrella, and it would be highly unlikely for this resolution to be accepted by Afro-Am. Dean Certain's two major arguments to departmental status were the size of the proposed department and the added difficulties in tenuring faculty in an interdisciplinary department. Both arguments were flimsy and unfounded. Dean Certain appeared to be grasping at straws to not reveal the truth, that his opposition seemed more grounded in institutionalized racism rather than a real concern for the student or even the academic community on campus.

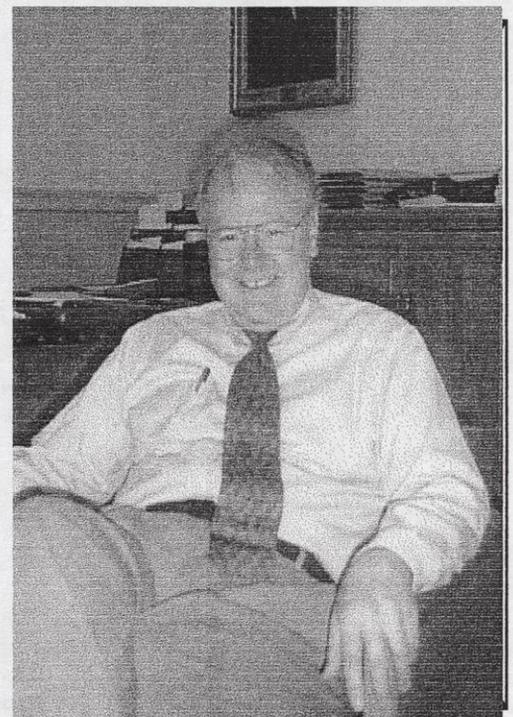
Dean Certain agreed to read the document, so we postponed the meeting until then. He expressed an interest in forming a committee to investigate the idea further. We are familiar with this stalling tactic and are well aware that

LETTER TO DEAN CERTAIN IN RESPONSE TO HIS UNPROFESSIONALISM

I am writing in response to our telephone conversation on Monday morning, June 19, 2000. I cannot ignore the disturbing interchange that took place with you on that day. You made several comments that were threatening and unprofessional which I have outlined in this letter.

I called as the designated representative of the Chicana/o Studies Departmental Organizing Committee (CSDOC) since you had not responded to the demands our committee had submitted for your examination approximately three weeks prior. I had left several voice mails before receiving a response from you. I half expected you to come on the phone apologetically and I certainly didn't expect the irate manner in which you did or was I prepared for the question you asked. **"Don't you work for me?"** was your response when I asked if you had looked over the document and asked when you would get back with us. I assumed the comment was made in reference to my appointment as a project assistant in the Chicana and Chicano Studies Program. When I asked what that had to do with our conversation you said, **"I'm not accustomed to my employees questioning me or giving me deadlines."** At which I commented you must have some very unhappy employees and informed you I was not calling as one of your employees but as a Graduate student on this committee. At which you responded, **"I'm not accustomed to students giving me deadlines either."** As I said over the telephone, I am very uncomfortable with someone in your position saying that I cannot question you. This is an infringement on my right to freedom of speech. I have every right to question you and you personally do not have to answer. But as the Dean of Letters and Science you have an obligation to answer any question posed to you as long as they are not of a personal nature. As to deadlines, Dean Certain, most people in professional positions work under deadlines. This is the only way work gets done in an efficient and timely manner. I am beginning to understand why it has taken the Chicana/o Studies Program over 25 years to become a

issues put to committees die in indecision. His comments were clearly deceptive, stating that while he supported an African-American Studies department, a Chicana/o Studies department was another matter entirely. It remained unclear how he would be "willing to work with us." He also stated that if we obtained the funding, he would take it. This is the same structure of the hacenderos and peones. We go out to work the fields, and bring the money back to the master, who will then distribute the money how he feels we should receive it. I guess that is how it is now. Of course, students should not have to take on that responsibility - it should be enough that we, (university, Madison, and Milwaukee community) have voiced and proven a need. The university has a responsibility to us to fulfill that need.



Dean Phillip Certain
College of Letters & Science

Continuation from page 2

department under the College of Letter and Science.

The other disconcerting comment you made was **"We can yell at each other back and forth but I'm still not going to give you a date on my response."** I was not yelling and I didn't expect that reaction from a dean. The CSDOS was attempting to get a timeline on this initiative and be upfront with you about any actions we would be taking. When I asked if it would be a week before you have any idea as to when you can respond. You commented **"I don't know."** "Will it be a month? **"I don't know."** Will it take until the end of the summer? **"I don't know."** This child-like retort is beneath the dean of the largest college at the University of Wisconsin Madison.

Your blatant disrespect for Chicana/os and the CSDOS representatives when we first met with you on Wednesday May 3rd is inexcusable. Your cynical attitude with a committee that was attempting to meet with you in a professional venue was unwarranted. When we said we would petition the Legislature for money if needed. You mockingly commented, **"Sure if you can get the money I'll take it."** Students and community should not need to do the work administrators like yourself are generously paid to do. This is yet another example of the reservation mentality under which your college operates.

I am sure you do not approach other interested committees in this demeanor or you would not be dean of Letters and Science. So I can only assume you addressed us in this manner because you have a complete disregard for the Chicana/os on this campus and in the Madison community. It is becoming clearer why the Chicana/o Studies Program has been allowed to fall into such shambles.

I feel your alienated retort and reminder of my position within the university was an attempt to intimidate me in light of the impending demands made by the CSDOC. Should I apply for a position within the College of Letters and Science, can I expect my application to be examined impartially? I hope your attitude does not reflect your ability to remain unbiased. I am requesting a written apology to guarantee that any future position I hold within the Chicana/o Studies Program or other departments under your supervision will not be endangered. As to your question Dean Certain **"Don't you work for me?"** the answer is no. You work for me, and for every student who pays tuition, every alumna, and the Madison and Wisconsin community that pays your salary.

Sincerely, Dèborah Vàsquez
c/s

This letter is in response to the irate manner in which Dean Phillip Certain responded when asked when he would be informing the Chicana/o Studies Department Organizing Committee on his decision.

A Toda Madre Continued from page 1

student? The present structure and the lack of funds to support it has impeded its growth. The history of the Chicana/o Studies Program shows the failure of Letters and Science to develop a focused, structured curriculum, so students who obtain their certificate and deemed experts are spreading the watered down information they acquired from this program. Dean Certain is well aware that 2.5 faculty cannot do justice to Chicana/o studies. You simply cannot create the strong curriculum needed to attract qualified candidates for these position much less professors invested in Chicano Studies.

Letters and Science is the largest and most important college on campus, and as chair Dean Certain needs to be a leader in changing the culture of this institution. We asked him several questions about his efforts toward the strengthening of Chicana/o Studies such as what he had done as Dean to inform himself about Chicano/as, and to develop the Chicano/a Studies Program into a department. His silence was an indicator of his efforts. This is not a moral position for this university to take. Benign neglect to any population is intolerable. We need this university to act proactively. Letters and Science has not done anything proactively for historically disadvantaged minorities, since implementing the Afro-American Studies Department. We appreciate the support given to our Black brothers and sisters because they greatly deserve it, but to support only one minority population and not others is discrimination. "Given" may be the wrong word since we understand that Blacks also have had to struggle with the university to obtain anything they received. Why is there a need for any group to fight for everything for which we have a right? But if fight is what we have to do, we will fight.

We have formed an organizing committee to mobilize and we are protracting the struggle for a Chicana/o Studies Department. We have notified the MEChA community nationwide, the university and Madison community, the Chicano/Mexicano population in the Midwest, Southern California, and in South Texas. We urge everyone to support us. Contact MEChA # 608-263-4830 or e-mail mechavque@studentorg.wisc.edu if you want to help.

UPCOMING EVENTS

•STRUGGLE for a CHICANA/O STUDIES DEPARTMENT

MEChA as a component of the Chicana/o Studies Department Organizing Committee invite you to take an initiative to help in the struggle to obtain department status for Chicana/o Studies. For more information call

Juanita Soto or Dèborah Vàsquez
@ the MEChA office #608-263-4830
or e-mail mechayque@students.wisc.edu

- VOLTICATZIN - September, 2000
- DIEZ Y SEIS de SEPTIEMBRE - September, 2000
- LA SEMANA CHICANA - October, 2000

NO SECOND RATE EDUCATION

FOR OUR
CHICANA & CHICANO
NATION

WE DEMAND A
CHICANA/O STUDIES
DEPARTMENT
NOW!

CONGRATULATIONS MEChistas

MEChA, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan congratulates the Chicanas and Chicanos who graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison with the ability to pass through this racist institution without losing themselves in assimilation or complacency.

The Chicana and Chicano Studies Program at the university in cooperation with the Chicana/o organizations MEChA, and the Chicana Grads of Aztlan presented to the Madison community the First Annual Chicana and Chicano Commencement. The event took place on Saturday, May 21 at 6:00 p.m. at the Press House across from the Memorial Library. We are extremely thankful to Los Hermanos Avila who volunteered to performed Danza Azteca to open the ceremony. La bienvenida was given by Dèborah Vàsquez on behalf of Dr. Prospero Saiz, the current director of the Chicana and Chicana Studies Program. Dr. Yolanda Broyles-González, a Chicana from the University of Califas Santa Barbara, eloquently gave concejos to the new graduates and placed perspective on the race for education and success. The MEChA chairs Gladiola Reyes and Darrel Balderrama presented the graduates with medallas with the Calendario Azteca noting the importance of carrying something indigenous with you in order to keep you grounded to what in reality is important. Ofelia Delgado Balderas received a certificate from the Chicana/o Studies Program and spoke passionately about her disappointment in the program. Dr. Broyles-González presented the students with Chicana/o Studies sashes and in contrast to the university's commencement, had the graduate's families come up to receive the sash, reminding us that few of us accomplish this step without the support of our families and friends. The pachanga ended with a cena al èstilo tejano and a baile con mùsica in the parking lot behind the MEChA offices.

MEChA is delighted with the Chicana/o community that came together and volunteered their talents and time to make this event a success. We would like to thank everyone who participated to make this event possible, and those who came in support.

Rosalva Amezcua De León
Masters of Science – Counseling
Hometown – Carson, Califaztlan

Ofelia Balderas Delgado
Bachelors of Arts
Behavioral Science & Law
Bachelors of Arts – Sociology
Certificate – Chicana & Chicano
Studies
Certificate – Criminal Justice
Hometown - San Anto, Tejaztlan

Melissa Ann Finn
Bachelors of Arts
Communication Arts
Hometown - Racine, Wisconsin

Veronica Gallegos Narvaez
Bachelor of Science
Industrial Engineering
Hometown – Rocksprings, Tejaztlan

Oselotzin Tekpaizcalli
Dèborah Vàsquez Esquivel
Masters of Fine Arts – 2-D & 3-D
Hometown - San Anto, Tejaztlan



Dr.
Yolanda
Broyles-González



Left to right: Veronica Gallegos Narvaez, Rosalva Amezcua De León, Dr. Yolanda Broyles-González, Oselotzin Tekpaizkalli (Déborah Vásquez), Ofelia Delgado, Melissa Ann Fin



CONGRATULATIONS MECHístas

You are proof that you can be involved and graduate too.

Los
Hermanos
Avila

MOVIMIENTO ESTUDIANTIL



CHICANO DE AZTLÁN

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