

# THE CHICANO/A STUDIES PROGRAM AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY: ITS ORIGINS AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

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## ABSTRACT

*The proliferation of Chicano students on college and university campuses was made possible through the passing of non-discriminatory acts toward minority groups in the United States. Passed in the mid-1960s, the Equal Opportunities Act and the Civil Rights Act made higher education more attainable for students of color. It was not until the late 1960s that students began to unite, voice their concerns and question the euro-centric education system. This essay addresses one of the major demands that Chicano Students placed on university officials: to be taught their history, culture, and contributions to American society by Chicano professors. This historical excavation was conducted through the use of archival materials, as well as, oral histories to recreate history of the establishment of the Chicano Studies Program at Washington State University. Also addressed is one of the challenges that this program currently faces due to the lack of resources and support for minority education programs.*

## INTRODUCTION

Historically, U.S. institutions of higher education have limited access to minority students thus creating exclusive institutions. It was not until post-World War II that these institutions began admitting students of color in large numbers. The 1960s saw a proliferation of Chicano students on college/university campuses mainly in the Southwestern states. "At that time the information was that 80 percent of farm-worker kids did not make it out of high-school" (Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama interview, 2003). This was possible because of anti-discrimination legislation, such as the Equal Opportunities Act and the Civil Rights Act, passed in the mid-1960s by the Johnson administration.

In late 1960s, students began to organize to voice their concerns and express their questions about the Euro-centric education system. Students recognized the power as well as the privilege they had acquired through their own matriculation on college campuses. According to Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama who was a student at that time: "I definitely looked the part of the 60's child. I was a farm-worker kid, but I also wanted and was willing to acknowledge that I was a child of privilege, because even though I came from a farm-worker family, I was in college; I was a university student."

Students understood the importance for *La Raza* to become educated for success within white mainstream society. However, the Euro-centric education system advocated assimilation among young Chicanas/os. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, the action came. Chicana/o students banded together to challenge the educational system. Strategically utilizing the education system to benefit their communities, Chicano/as became vocal and politically involved in the education system. At the community and mainstream level they began raising conscious awareness of the continued oppression of their people.

This paper addresses one of the major demands that Chicano students placed on university officials: to be taught their history, literature, culture, and contributions to American society by Chicano professors to whom they could relate and utilize as mentors. We also investigate the origins of Chicano/a Studies as a field of study at the national and local levels, including Washington State University (WSU). Our focus is on the link between events at WSU and larger national trends, and whether the larger national movement and local initiatives were successful, in part, because of these students' efforts.

The historical excavation undertaken was accomplished through the use of archival materials as well as oral histories to analyze and document the history of the creation and establishment of the Chicano Studies Program at Washington State University. To date, the bulk of literature on Chicano/a Studies focuses on the Southwest, excluding the Northwest altogether. This project develops a body of literature that addresses and documents the history of the student movement in the Northwest by exploring the events in one university setting. Documenting the formation and history of Chicano/a movement at one institution allows future projects to build upon and further develop Chicano/a Studies resources for and about the Northwest.

## **METHODS**

Secondary sources such as books and anthologies were reviewed for background information. Primary sources from archives in a variety of locations were used to excavate histories and to compose a picture of what took place in the 1970s at WSU. Finally, oral histories with individuals involved in the development of Chicano Studies at Washington State University were gathered.

Secondary sources were used to develop a timeline of historical events before, during, and after the creation of Chicano Studies at a national level. From this, I created the historical background section for this project. Developing a historical background of events sheds light on and allows credit to be given to those people who were involved in the politics and struggles of Chicano/as in the U.S. Equally important it helps us understand why some scholars have only examined problems associated with this counter-hegemonic discipline. The larger national historical information also sets the stage for a more in-depth analysis of the development of the Chicano/a Studies program established at Washington State University during the 1970s.

Manuscript research was a critical tool for this project. Primary documents located in the WSU libraries, in addition to a collection of historical documents and newspaper clippings located in the archives of the WSU Chicano/a Latino/a Student Center were used to excavate the history of the founding of Chicano Studies at Washington State University. These were useful because they document the politics and the relationships, or lack of, that involved students, faculty and staff, as well as the WSU administration. In these archives, I found a printed copy of the original proposal submitted by the committee for the creation of the program. Various newspaper clippings from the 1970s told of student protests, sit-ins, and anti-racism demonstrations and programs held by students of color. These writings reflect student sentiment and action regarding the WSU curriculum and general campus environment at the time Chicano Studies was founded.

Next, information was gathered through surveys. A questionnaire was administered to students enrolled in Chicano Studies courses offered in the spring semester of 2003 at WSU Pullman campus. Unfortunately, the survey sample was small due to the fact that only three courses were taught that semester. The three courses surveyed were "La Chicana in U.S. Society," "Contemporary Chicano/a Literature," and "Introduction to Chicano/a Studies." The survey questions were developed to determine why students take Chicano/a Studies courses and also what they learned by the end of the semester. Because the sample size was small the survey was designed to obtain qualitative answers.

Oral histories were collected through interviews with alumni and other key individuals crucial to and active in the establishment of Chicano Studies at Washington State University.

Edward D. Ives' (1995), *The Tape-Recorded Interview*, was helpful in structuring questions and organizing the interviews. This book served as a guide for transcribing the interviews.

I interviewed two individuals: Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama, a 1997 WSU graduate who is currently working as Diversity Programs Administrator, Internal Civil Rights Branch, of the Washington State Department of Transportation in Olympia; and, Carolyn Allen, a 1978 WSU graduate with a degree in pharmacy, who currently works as a pharmacist in the communities of Pullman and Moscow. Both of these women were strong student activists in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

## **CHICANO STUDIES: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In the 1960s, numerous student activist organizations emerged on college campuses throughout the Southwest. They began to address issues affecting the Chicano community. Learning from the African American community, students took charge and embraced their ethnicity as a form of pride and empowerment. Primarily working class students established organizations such as the Mexican American Student Confederation (MASC), United Mexican American Students (UMAS), Mexican American Student Association (MASA), and the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO).

Though each organization addressed different topics by placing emphasis on such issues as politics, racism, equal opportunities, one common thread emerged between them: the struggle to increase educational opportunities for Mexican-American people and to establish academic programs for the study of Mexican experience (Quiñonez, 1990). However, a lack of political involvement, and the pursuit for acceptance by the dominant culture, kept the student organizations from questioning authority and the status quo. Then, in the late 1960s, the uniting of Mexican student organizations and teachers such as Sal Castro, with community members such as "Corky" Gonzalez, gave birth to the cry for "Chicano Power." Unity based on identity, politics, and the redefinition of the term Chicano provided students new tools and a self defined language to fight for a voice in United States, and in the U.S. institutions of higher education.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of struggle and change for communities of color in the United States. With the beginning of the Chicano Movement in the 1960s, which led to self-determination for members of the Chicano community, Chicanas/os challenged the oppression they faced as working class, ethnic minorities. They confronted attacks by society in every area of social, political, and economic life.

The dominant society, including the media, education, and other institutions, viewed Chicanos as silent, docile, ignorant and lazy. But this situation changed with the Chicano Movement. The fight for Chicano liberation began with the rebirth of Chicano nationalist consciousness or Chicanismo. The rebirth of consciousness was composed of acknowledging history, identifying class positions, and embracing their own culture. Under the oppressive conditions that the dominant society imposed on Chicanos, this new identity of Chicanismo became a politically charged statement embracing Chicano/a nationality and culture and a will for survival (Quiñones, 1990).

With the rise of a new self-determination, Chicanas/os fought oppression on a number of fronts. This included battles for farm workers rights and led to the unionization of California fields under the guidance of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. It also led to the organization of the *Raza Unida* Party to address political issues. The Chicano Student movement, in part grew out of the Crusades for Justice. Rodolfo "Corky" González, based out of Denver Colorado, led the Crusades for Justice, which was one of the primary organizers of Chicano Youth Liberation Conferences. They also organized high school student strikes and demonstrations against racism in schools and police brutality. In 1969, "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" emerged from the first organized conference. This document called for the mass mobilization of Chicanos for community control of resources, including education (Rodríguez, 1977).

El Plan de Aztlán was an important turning point for Chicano Youth. It was part of an effort to refine their conception of collective Chicano identity and to build a political program based on that identity. Chicano nationalists proposed to break away from Anglo hegemony by demanding community control or local autonomy over schools among other things. The students embarked on a quest for the liberation of young Chicano minds from the racist American school system. The system had traditionally used assimilation to hinder the cultural empowerment of Chicanos/as and condition students to accept the values of the dominant system. Student activists agreed to acts of defiance towards the socially imposed norms using cultural empowerment as their main tool.

According to historian David Gutiérrez (1995), Aztlán represented the symbolic territorial base of the Chicano people; later to be a metaphor of an ideological place of the Chicano Movement and where all Chicanos/as ideas would return. Aztlán consisted of the North, Central, and Southern regions of the Southwest. It was a quest to reclaim history. Chicanas/os needed to create programs that would teach history and culture in a way that would prevent assimilation into the dominant culture.

The Chicano Student movement emerged in response to a dramatic increase in the numbers of Chicano youth enrolled in high schools who were frustrated with the assimilationist tactics of the education system. The growing student numbers had not changed the racist structures within which students studied. Students were prohibited from using Spanish in the classroom or on school grounds; Anglo racist historical perspectives of the Chicano people dominated classrooms; Anglo principals and teachers directly and indirectly expressed their racist attitudes; Chicano students who were not pushed out of the schools were tracked into vocational careers rather than academic courses; and most often, Chicano/a students were tracked into military services rather than a college career (Mints 2000).

Chicano Students demanded change and liberation to choose a better future for their communities. These changes were demanded in organized blowouts throughout the Southwest. In these blowouts, student united efforts and planned non-violent marches and protests until their demands were heard and actions were taken to meet their demands. The most effective blowout was in 1968 in Los Angeles California, which was also immediate to the end of bilingual education in schools in southern California. During this demonstration, 15,000 Chicano students walked out of barrio schools and triggered similar actions among students in predominantly Black and several mostly white schools. The students demanded "Education, Not Contempt," "Education Not Eradication." They demanded Chicano control of schools in Chicano communities. They demanded control of an education system that continued to push Chicano students out of the academic world (Gutiérrez 1995).

At universities and colleges students demanded equal education opportunities, elimination of racist oppression and access to institutions of higher education that historically had excluded them (Muñoz 1984). Following the words of José Vasconcelos: "At this time we do not come to work for the university, but we demand the university work for our people" (Maciel 1996). They began to organize Chicano Studies programs, open door admissions, and community control of higher education. With an increasing demand for the creation of ethnic studies in academia, Chicano Studies as a discipline became a reality for students. Chicano Studies programs were a direct result of student demands to learn about their people's culture and history, to provide them with the knowledge and training needed to make changes in their communities, and to challenge the assimilationist's perspectives imposed on them by a predominantly white university.

The first Chicano Studies programs came into existence during the 1968-1969 academic year at various university/college campuses in California. Each college/university program proposal reflected a wide variety of perspectives on the objectives of a Chicano Studies program (Muñoz 1984). It soon became clear that if Chicano Studies programs were to be established, there needed to be a common framework. There was a need for the consolidation of different perspectives and

objectives to establish cooperation between all those interested in developing a Chicano discipline with the goal of Chicano/a liberation through education.

The Chicano Coordinating Committee on Higher Education (CCHE) was founded as part of a larger coordinated effort to establish Chicano Studies programs. The committee was composed of active student leaders, faculty, and staff involved with Chicano Studies programs at various campuses. The creation of CCHE led to a statewide conference to formulate a plan of action or framework that would provide the necessary guidance and direction for the overall struggle for equal access to higher education. This conference took place in April 1969 at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The conference hosted representatives from twenty-nine different campuses, as well as university faculty and staff, and active community members involved in education programs for Chicano communities.

After many hours of meetings and planning, proposals for Chicano Studies were developed to meet the needs of the students at the respective campuses. Some groups called for “*Raza Studies*,” others for the establishment of centers, others for departments, but the most ambitious in terms of scope and structure was the proposal developed at UC-Santa Bárbara. This proposal called for a Chicano Studies Center to include a department, a research component, and a community-university component to develop resources and knowledge to make change in their communities (Muñoz 1984). By the end of the conference the groundwork for Chicano Studies programs had developed with the input of those present. The framework for Chicano studies was the document “*El Plan de Santa Bárbara*.” This became known as the “Chicano master plan.” “*El Plan*” also provided a guide for recruiting students to the university, and it mapped a strategy for hiring and retaining Chicano/a faculty.

Another key component that emerged from the Santa Bárbara Conference was the uniting of the multiple student organizations under one name: *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlán* (MEChA). This union would allow the chapters at different college campuses to network with each other. The organization served as a political cultural and social group. MEChA was also structured to provide support and work in connection to Chicano Studies programs.

“*El Plan*” was a framework for Chicano/a Studies, designed to enrich students’ understanding that the continuing influences the Mexican American community in the U. S. It reflected the ideas and dialogue that had been generated in various workshops at the conference. The document stressed anti-assimilation and anti-racism as the foundation of Chicano Studies and argued that the fight for social and political change was instrumental in the quest for the empowerment of the Chicano community. “*El Plan de Santa Bárbara*” became a significant document for the future development of Chicano Studies programs at other campuses. Today it remains an important document because it captures the mood of the time, especially among Chicano/a activists. It also continues to inspire and guide new generations of Chicanos/as as they work to direct their own education (Muñoz, 1984).

Since its creation, Chicano Studies has faced numerous challenges. One of early challenges was internal sexism and challenges to sexism. Chicana Feminists were the first to question the idea of a unified Chicano culture. Throughout the 1970s, feministas criticized Chicano politics and culture for its sexism. They rebelled against sexism through poetry and scholarly research, and produced material that criticized and addressed the problem within the Chicano/a community. Many of their criticisms led to the exploration of new areas of research within Chicano Studies programs. This included issues on identity, and questioning old school theories and expanding the time frame in which most previous scholarly research had been completed.<sup>1</sup> Another result of feminist criticisms was the development of courses on “*La Chicana*.” Universities resisted the

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<sup>1</sup>The original time frame being studied was 1848, after the Mexican-American war, to the present. This was a critical time for understanding the survival of Chicanos in the United States. Chicanas pointed to the conquest of Mexico by Spain as the beginning of their oppression.

incorporation of this new course into the Chicano Studies curriculum because it required new resources. According to Alma García (1992), La Chicana courses did not become part of the curriculum until 1971 after Chicana activists placed various demands on program coordinators and university officials. At the same time, the Chicano Committee on Higher Education in California adopted a resolution to revise the 1969 “Plan de Santa Bárbara,” in order to include Chicanas and their role in the Chicano Movement. This resolution also forced universities to recruit more Chicana faculty and administrators (García, 1992).

Yet, with the creation of courses on “La Chicana,” other courses in the Chicano Studies curriculum moved away from incorporating gender issues. Decades after the establishment of these courses, “these specialized courses on ‘La Chicana’ often limit the amount of pressure which can be placed on other Chicano Studies courses to include gender issues to their own course materials” (García, 1992). On the other hand, the shortcomings evident in Chicano Studies scholarship concerning gender analysis have encouraged the development of research on Chicanas by Chicanas. Today, a full incorporation of the study of Chicanas in the Chicano Studies curriculum will require the continuation of research by both Chicana and Chicano scholars with focuses on Chicanas and the multiple effects of race, class, and gender on their daily lives (García, 1992).

Chicano Studies programs are now faced with yet another challenge and probably one of the most daunting in their history. With an increase in Latina/o students on US campuses, university officials have moved to take resources from Chicana/o Studies and students rather than creating new resources. Chicanas/os and other Latino/as are lumped together in inter-ethnic programs that have little contact with Chicano/a communities and little sense of the struggle and history that brought Chicano Studies to U. S. universities. We have yet to see the administrators win this battle. Chicano Students and MEChistA’s have begun to organize and explore this troubling issue.

## **CHICANO/A STUDIES AT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

The 1960s saw many changes for minority students. The fight for equality through demonstrations, blowouts, and peaceful protests were heavily concentrated in the Southwest due to the large ethnic minority population. Nonetheless, the uprising of culturally empowered and self-determined minority students also influenced institutions such as Washington State in the Northwest. Some may argue that Washington State University (WSU) did not have a campus-wide Chicano Student movement. I would argue that in a sense there was a student movement that was heavily influenced by the national movement. It was comprised of multiple ethnic student groups who bonded together to fight racism on campus. The movement at WSU began following the events in the Southwest when a group of students and faculty became a politicized organization and established a Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlán (MEChA) Chapter. This allowed the group to become part of the larger Chicano movement. At the local site, establishing a MEChA Chapter allowed for networking and coalition building with other student activist groups. These coalitions led to a community-wide strike and demands, which were crucial in the establishing of Chicano/a Studies, Black Studies, and Native American Studies programs.

The year was 1969. The place was Washington State University, in Pullman Washington, a predominantly white, land grant institution, surrounded by wheat farms. At Washington State University some of the early programs for minority students included the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the Experimental Education Program both under the National Educational Opportunity Program. These programs were a direct result of the anti-discriminatory legislation passed in the mid 60s under the Johnson administration. The programs were designed to increase access for students of color to post-secondary institutions and to assist and support their needs while transitioning and adjusting to middle-class lifestyles (Programs, 1969). HEP, was established for agricultural youth: children who came from farm-working families, mostly

Chicanos, who, for various reasons, had not completed or received a high school diploma. This program was very instrumental and played a key role in the early stages of the creation of a Chicano/a community on campus and then the establishment of Chicano Studies. Not only did these students take classes on campus and live in the dorms, but they were also recruited to attend WSU to further their education (Mendoza de Sugiyama, 2003).

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chicano/a students began to notice that there were only a handful of Mexicano/a and Chicano/a students on campus, comprised mostly of international students. Students like Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama began to get involved trying to increase number of Chicano/a college students. In an interview in July, 2003, Mendoza de Sugiyama, stated: "Given the population of Washington, farm-workers make up a large percentage, and because I am a farm-worker kid, I thought that there needed to be more representation on our campus."

In October, 1969, the few Chicano/a students united and established the first Mexican American Student Association at WSU (Haythorne, 1969). According to Mendoza de Sugiyama, "the group was small, but we followed the procedure necessary to become a student group, and we were granted recognition status by the ASWSU student activities board. ... And right away we began to address issues that concerned our community." The Mexican American Student Association (MASA) consisted of about six to seven official members, as well as students from the High School Equivalency Program, for a total of 18 members. In its early stages, the organization was more of a social group. Mendoza de Sugiyama stated: "The primary focus was really a social organization, because we needed to establish a sense of community and unity." Because she lived off campus, her home was a place where members could "hang-out" and get away from the campus life. "It was a safe haven, where we could eat tortillas, play our music, and just talk in Spanish." As community and unity was established among the members, the organization's focus changed. Organization members became politically involved, and aware of issues affecting their community nation-wide. They recognized their connections to United Farm Workers and the boycotting of agriculture products, the Apartheid system in South Africa, and the strong Chicano Student movement in the Southwest, as well as the opposition to the Viet Nam war. This increased political awareness led to the decision to change the organizations name to Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano/a de Aztlán (MEChA). "This was a real important step for our group. The name change brought us together with other student organizations nationally who were really a political source in the country at that time," Mendoza de Sugiyama said. MEChA adopted the national philosophical documents, as well, as the mission and goals established in "El Plan de Santa Bárbara," to guide the organization in unity with other chapters' nation wide.

The decision to change the name was also influence by visits by Cesar Chávez and the United Farm Workers to the Northwest. Participating in the boycotts of agricultural products, as well as in the strikes held at local grocery stores helped students understand the need for community unity and political involvement. Changing the name of the organization allowed students to network with other chapters that were beginning to emerge at the state and regional level. Adopting the philosophy papers "El Plan de Aztlán," and "El Plan de Santa Bárbara" as well as the national constitution allowed organizations to support each other's fights and make the organization stronger and nationally recognized.

Mendoza de Sugiyama, as well as MEChA, played a key role in the establishment of the Chicano/a Studies program at WSU. By the end of the year, MEChA had established two main goals for the upcoming year. The purpose of the organization was to "enlighten students on the Mexican American culture, society, heritage, history, and to contribute to the understanding of minority groups within American society; and to further the educational and cultural opportunities for Mexican Americans." The goals were to help with the linguistic improvement project of ethnic groups that spoke poor English, as well as to work with the Educational Policies Committee on the creation and establishment of Mexican-American studies option of the American Minority Studies program (Haythorne 1969).

In 1969, the turmoil that swept colleges in the Southwest had brought unrest to WSU. Chicano identity began to appeal to students who believed in the self-determination and conscious identity component of the Chicano movement. Among the core group who spread the passion of the movement were Sylvia Sharma, Dr. Ruben Duran, Rita Duran, Rudy Cruz, Antonio Estrada, Roberto Segura, Livie Duran, Maria Estrada, Moises Torrescano, and of course Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama.

Due to the recommendation of MEChA, the only Chicano student group on campus at the time, Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama was elected as a student representative to sit on a subcommittee that had been established for the development of Mexican-American Studies at WSU. The Chicano students wanted the program to be more than a white-oriented curriculum designed to educate white students. "It was important that such a program be valuable as a positive direction of study for Chicanos." Margarita was quick to express her concerns, those of the MEChA's, and the Chicano/a community to the Chicano Studies subcommittee. Recommendations included a name change to Estudios Chicanos (Chicano Studies) program in unity to the larger national trend mainly in the Southwest.

The program subcommittee was established under the direction of Herbert Wood, who at that time was the Dean of the College of Sciences and Arts. The committee for Chicano Studies consisted of faculty, staff, and students, most of whom were Chicanos or who had a background and connection with Chicano students and the communities. Administration was also a part of the committee, but their role was to address logistics. Silvia Sharma, who was the advisor for MEChA, as well as an instructor for the HEP program, was selected as the chair of the committee. The purpose of the committee was to:

1. Investigate what contributions WSU can make towards a solution of problems related to minority groups;
2. Furnish a vehicle for exploring and sharing knowledge related to minority group studies according to WSU's responsibilities;
3. Function as the workhorse for early, but rational, developments of Mexican – American studies;
4. Ensure involvement of minority groups in the committee;
5. Establish an active file of dossiers of scholars potentially useful in staging the program development; and,
6. Direct information to appropriate departments to suggest frameworks for obtaining grants related to the enhancement of the minority situation. (*WSU Daily Evergreen January 1970, page 3*).

The subcommittee was to establish a liaison with leaders and organizations representative of minority groups in the geographic region, and utilize their advice in development of the program. The most important goal for the subcommittee was to have a program established, with the hope that it would be comparable and equitable to the other minority programs. The subcommittee was fortunate because at that time they had strong commitment from Chicano professors on campus to advise their activities and voice their concerns. One subcommittee member commented that, Dr. Ruben Duran and Dr. Zenido Camacho "really nurtured and mentored" the students' mission, and "even though they were in the hard sciences... [they]... got on board and wanted to be apart of this project" (Mendoza de Sugiyama 2003). The relationship with the Chicano faculty led to another component in making the program possible. Crucial to its success was the recruitment of Chicano faculty and staff. In a proposal submitted in 1970, the committee it was stated that the "presentation of courses by Chicanos would reduce barriers which often arise when non-Chicano instructors and administrators present and administer Chicano Programs" (CLSC Collection). According to Mendoza de Sugiyama, the subcommittee was looking to recruit faculty and staff

with PhDs in Anthropology, Psychology, History, English, and in all disciplines possible to counter Euro-centric research and pedagogy. “We wanted PhD Latinos who came with cultural knowledge and sensitivity that would...really bring reality to what people knew about us and the culture and how diverse we are” (Mendoza de Sugiyama 2003).

Another component of the subcommittee that made possible the establishment of the program was the strong commitment by committee members to Chicano students and the community support received by those students. Because students, faculty, and staff were culturally sensitive and well informed, they realized the program was important and warranted. In the eyes of the subcommittee, it was essential that an effective program in Chicano Studies do three things: First, it must provide opportunities for Chicano youth in mainstream high school education. Second, it must develop the students’ potential for serving society as a whole and as fellow Chicanos. Third, it must take responsibility to educate society as a whole about Chicano culture (see CLSC Collection).

In spite of the strong support by faculty and students, administrative officials were not as committed to the establishment of the Chicano Studies program and for the most part resisted the committee recommendations. As administrators moved slowly, often not addressing the requests of the subcommittee, students grew dissatisfied with the lack of support. Students also defined the failed commitment from university officials as a call for action. The action took form through strikes, sit-ins, and teach-ins constantly calling for their demands to be addressed by university officials.

During spring semester 1970, university administrators were confronted with student demands. Encouraged by the student movement in the southwest, and inspired by local organizations like MEChA and the Black Student Union (BSU), about 5000 students went on strike to protest the racist practices of the university, the U.S. intrusion in Cambodia, and called for the establishment and support of ethnic programs.

Even after the students protested, the subcommittee encountered problems. The most important challenge was financial:

The hard negotiations came with regards to money to set up the program. The program consisted of having a director, a secretary, and faculty, as well as providing assistantships to graduate students in involved with Chicano Studies who would be the primary staff personnel in the program who could teach in the program and would eventually become teaching assistants. This required a strong commitment from the university officials (Mendoza de Sugiyama).

The committee had submitted a budget to the administration asking for \$2,880 for expenses to correspond with community leaders around the state and to travel to communities to discuss problems with residents. In February, 1970 the ASWSU senate allocated \$ 20,000 of student activates fees for the Ethnic Studies committee to help the development of a curriculum for minority programs. The money was to be used for such things as wages for a part-time secretary, telephone and subscriptions, travel, supplies, materials and equipment (Vadney, February 1970).

Another challenge the committee faced was the bureaucracy of the institution. Bureaucratic procedure and the lack of respect from administrative members at WSU slowed committee progress. Mendoza de Sugiyama felt that the committees were not taken seriously:

Just things like using copy machines in the dean’s office, and the treatment that we got from personnel. The secretary told a less aggressive student, ‘that those were not our machines to use.’ The student came back in tears because the secretary was so mean to her, it made me so angry that I took those papers from her and I marched up there and I started using the machine. The secretary came up to me and told me, ‘this is not your machine to use.’ And I just read her out, I

said 'look I am a member of this committee and these things I am coping is for the work of the university, and you don't own this machine and if you have a problem you go talk to the dean, not to me!' ...But it was not getting respect. I don't think they thought this was serious initially, but once they saw it was, people knew... not to mess with us, that we were serious about getting this done.

The majority of support for this project came from around campus, but so did resistance. There were groups of students, faculty and staff who did not believe the program was a valuable cause for which \$20,000 of student fees should be spent. What helped overcome the resistance were the student demands, and the commitment of some university officials like President Glenn Terrell and other important administrators. Glenn Terrell stated: "The commitment was made to the students, and the administration will do everything within its power to follow through with this commitment" (Vadney, April 1970).

A proposal was developed by the subcommittee that petitioned for a program in Chicano Studies leading to an undergraduate degree, which would be available to all students on campus. The curriculum included ten core courses, most of which were to be cross-listed with other departments. The program was to be an inter-departmental and inter-college undertaking, embracing departments in the College of Sciences and Arts, the College of Education, and the College of Home Economics. A recommendation was made that "the program be located administratively in the College of Sciences and Arts in the division of Humanities and Social Sciences." The ultimate goal for those students choosing to seek a degree in the Chicano/a Studies program, "was for them to move into graduate schools in the social sciences in the teaching profession, business, or the field of social work" (CLSC Collection).

The proposal was submitted to the university faculty and the Resident Institutional Staff (RIS). While the 600 RIS members filled the CUB auditorium, and met for several hours to discuss the proposed agenda, nearly 100 students filled the lobby outside the auditorium to express support for the approval of Chicano Studies program and curriculum. Approval for the request was finally released on May 28, 1970. It was announced that the establishment of a Chicano Studies program would take place the following fall semester. The program was accepted with lots of debate and very few negative votes. The program was to consist of ten core courses and 30 supporting courses in various departments (RIS Approves... May 1970). The first courses offered were:

1. Chicano Studies 110, Introduction to Chicano Culture
2. Chicano Studies 101, Intro. to Literary and Musical Forms of Chicano Culture.
3. Chicano Studies 411, Educational Problems of the Chicano in the Public Schools.
4. Chicano Studies 220, Arts of Mexico and Mexican Americans.
5. Chicano Studies 243, Chicano History.
6. Chicano Studies 324, Chicano Spanish.
7. Chicano Studies 352, High Civilizations of Meso-America
8. Chicano Studies 495, Field Experience
9. Chicano Studies 410, Ethnic Groups and Public Education
10. Chicano Studies 382, The Chicano in American Society

The program was under the guidance of Director Raymundo Marin. The months that followed were filled with planning, budgeting, scheduling, and organizing the implementation of the program.

The establishment of Chicano Studies at Washington State University was greatly influenced by the turmoil of the Southwest during the late 60s. Historical documents such as the proposal for

Chicano Studies and the philosophy papers of student organizations articulated goals and objectives strongly reflective of the larger national movement. These were used as supporting documentation and evidence of the need for a program of this emphasis. As on campuses throughout the U. S., WSU students progressed from a Mexican American social support group to a politicized MEChA Chapter which demanded significant change and voice in Chicano/a education.

The tactics used to accomplish the goals set by Chicano/students were borrowed, in part, from the Chicano Student movement. The militant acts of non-violent protest, as well as strikes and demands were first used by Chicano students in the Southwest. These actions were inspired by student activist groups who not only had acknowledged self-determination as a way to overcome a racist education system, but who had also developed a strong cultural and political identity.

### **CONCLUSION: TODAY'S CHALLENGE**

This excavation of history is important for we are presently at a critical watershed in the disciplines of Chicano/Ethnic and Critical Studies. As departments throughout the United States reevaluate their curricula, it is important for us all to be aware of the origins of these programs and their very complex histories. The research for this project indicates that Chicano/a Studies programs in the Northwest were founded as a part of a larger national movement, which were tied to community empowerment.

Nationally the Chicano Student movement accomplished its goal of establishing Chicano/a Studies programs at various institutions of higher education. The quest for achieving this goal was full of obstacles predominantly having to deal with university bureaucracy and apathy. However, the methods used enabled overcoming whatever resistance they encountered.

Today, the Southwest has established strong Chicano Studies programs that continue to advocate activism among their students and maintain a strong community focus. Program success has been due, in part, to the large Chicano population and student interest in the program, as well as the geographical proximity of one university program to the other. This close proximity allows for the collaboration as well as the competition for recruiting undergraduate and graduate students with an interest in the discipline of Chicano/a Studies.

At Washington State University, student efforts in the late 60s and early 70s led to the creation of a Chicano/a Studies program. The events leading to the establishment of the program were greatly influenced by the uprising of the student movement in the Southwest. Political Chicano/a organizations such as MEChA were established; and the philosophy, interests, and goals of the larger national movement were adopted and included in local documents such as the proposal submitted to university officials for a Chicano Studies program. Students resorted to the militant tactics that Chicanos were using in the Southwest to overcome the resistance they encountered from WSU administrators and other community members. The collaboration of MEChA with other activist student groups and the support from the Chicano professors on campus helped to achieve the approval and establishment of a Chicano/a Studies program in August, 1970.

Chicano Studies programs currently face a challenge similar to that which students overcame in establishing these programs. The number of courses on Latino/a issues has grown significantly over the years. Today they are typically used to replace Chicano Studies. University officials have opted to dilute the Chicano Studies curriculum to encompass a more diverse set of struggles of other Latino communities. While this is an important field to address, it should not be done at the expense of Chicano/a Studies. This move is even more troubling because it comes at a time when to address budget cuts, administrators are pushing to merge ethnic studies programs into mainstream disciplines.

It is crucial to remember that the Chicano Studies discipline was rooted in community struggles and activism. It was established to provide a space for Chicano students and faculty in institutions of higher education. The purpose was to teach Chicano history, culture and contributions to U. S. society through the eyes of Chicano faculty and communities. It was established to provide role models and mentors for Chicano students. Surveys administered by the author of this article indicate that WSU students still view Chicano/a Studies as an important field in itself. A survey of forty-two students previously enrolled in three Chicano courses offered at WSU, showed that 32 respondents were taking the course because they were majoring in or had a minor in Chicano Studies or a related ethnic field. Clearly students still have a strong interest in the discipline of Chicano Studies.

The results also suggest a large consensus that students were taking the course because they were interested in learning about Chicano history. One student stated that: "Because I am a Chicana, I wanted to learn about what my ancestors did, as well as their struggles and oppression." Another student stated: "These are the only courses where you learn something different than what you learned in high school about in U. S. history." The majority of students enrolled had prior experiences with the Chicano community through family, friends, work, and education.

The Chicano Studies curriculum is still fulfilling the goals established at its founding. However, due to the lack of resources that universities provide for Ethnic Studies programs, and the consolidation of the programs into mainstream disciplines, Chicano/a Studies programs continue to face unprecedented cutbacks. Grouping students of multiple backgrounds together and teaching courses that lack community connection and activism takes us back in history to the early struggles of the 1960s and '70s. The fight continues to legitimize the importance of Chicano Studies Programs while officials try to lump ethnic students together and call it "cultural education."

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