

**OUR BEGINNINGS –
A brief history of Social Work education
at San Jose State University,
prepared for The Association of Latino Social Work Educators.**

The following is presented with more detail than was possible at the historical presentation at the CSWE APM in San Francisco. The initial years involved many of us. But the vision of our earlier leaders in using Trabajadores de la Raza as an organizing and advocacy vehicle was quite effective for the numbers that we represented. Times are different, sentiments of our population are different, attitudes towards racial/ethnic differences are different, attitudes towards preferential treatment have hardened, and more of us are part of the 'establishment' (and part of the problem?), but are the problems the same? What remains as a major issue in social work education is that there are simply not enough Latinos in social work education – at the MSW level and, certainly, not enough going for the Ph.D.. As for our Beginnings?

The year was 1968. History was in the making. Between 1968 and 1970 Martin Luther King was shot; followed by the assassination of Robert Kennedy; Woodstock was 'the event' and anti-Vietnam protests reached their peak throughout the country. The Chicano Moratorium - a Chicano Protest against the Vietnam War in Los Angeles resulted in a riot and a deliberate/accidental killing by the police of Ruben Salazar, a respected Latino reporter in Los Angeles. The "Chicago 7" were found innocent of inciting a riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. The nation was in a turmoil. National Guardsmen shot Black female students at Mississippi State, and later, the more publicized shooting of students at Kent State University. Cesar Chavez was organizing Farm Workers in California and awakening the Mexican and Mexican American people. The nation was alive and active, and students, in particular, believed they could make a difference.

A SIGNIFICANT EVENT AT SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE - THE 1968 COMMENCEMENT!

At San Jose State University Chicano students who were part of the graduating class of 1968 staged a protest by walking out of commencement exercises en mass. They protested what they termed the irrelevant, white-dominated education they had received. The issue was kept alive over the summer and into the Fall, 68 semester and a negotiating committee of Chicano students and community members was formed to advocate for a curriculum, program and services better directed to the Chicano community. Two Chicano social workers were part of the negotiating committee or advisers to it (Sal Alvarez and Paul Sanchez) and were successful in promoting a social work program with the special mission of training social workers to work with and on behalf of the Spanish Speaking population and community. At the time, Sal Alvarez was Executive Director of the United States Catholic Conference, West Coast Division for the Spanish Speaking, and Paul Sanchez worked for the University of California, President's Office and

previously with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Both traveled the Southwest and had met numerous activist Chicano Social Workers.

The 1960 Master Plan for the California State University system included approval for the development of four Schools of Social Work in California. One of the four was a social work program at San Jose State College. The local chapter of NASW had been negotiating with SJSU administration for 6 years to get their approval for a regular MSW program, but according to the May, 1968 issue of the Santa Clara Chapter of NASW newsletter noted in their headline "**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM DISAPPROVED**". It was reported that the Graduate Committee of SJSU voted on April 17, 1968 "to not approve the development of a graduate social work program. The reasons given were: 1) SJSU was too tightly structure to assimilate and administer such a program, 2) the high staffing ratio required for this program would compete unduly with other programs under consideration, and 3) CSWE requirements represent an undesirable dictation of curriculum to the College and represent what could be considered to be an intrusion into the internal affairs of the College" (meaning the University). The report ended with a statement "The committee did not respond to the material in support of the program as presented. They may be responsive to broader, concerted political pressure from the total community."

The prescribed concerted political pressure was felt by the University Administration over the next several months by the reaction of the community to the Chicano students who walked-out of the 1968 Commencement exercises.

The Academic Vice President, Hobart W. Burns wrote a brief memo (November 23, 1968) to James Brown, Dean of Graduate Studies stating: "Jim: The President and I believe that, if at all possible, we should proceed as rapidly as possible with the development of a plan for the establishment of a Graduate School of Social Work on this campus and, by means of this memo, I am asking you to assume the leadership and responsibility. In this context let me offer two judgments: first, given the nature of our community and the demographic distribution by race or national origin it seems to me that any functional, effective social work curriculum would be based on or geared to the realities and needs of that community, rather than an abstract highly theoretical curriculum. Second, I hope we can devise that kind of program within the framework demanded by national social work accrediting agencies, **but if we cannot, and if the choice is to do like the accrediting agencies demand or like it should be done to be relevant to this community, let's go for the latter.....** We will want to talk about this, particularly about the kinds of problems we must anticipate with the Chancellor's Office and Trustees."

The negotiations with the University Administration resulted in the establishment of 1) A Committee on Mexican American Affairs, advisory to the President on all matters related to Chicano students and faculty at SJSU; 2) the establishment of a graduate program in Mexican American Studies, the first such graduate program in the nation; and 3) the establishment of a graduate social work program with the special mission of training social workers to work with and on behalf of the Spanish Speaking people and their community. The walk-out of the Chicano Class of 1968 also started the tradition of a

Chicano Commencement planned and organized by Chicano students every year and which is separate and apart from the regular SJSU commencement exercises. The annual Chicano Commencement has continued for 30 years.

1968 Manpower Assessment & Challenge and Demands Made to CSWE

In 1968 there was only one Chicano social work Ph.D. in the United States and that was Dr. Juan Ramos, formerly of San Jose, who had just graduated from the Florence Heller School of Advanced Studies in Social Welfare, Brandies University. There was one Latino involved with CSWE and that was Luis Medina who directed a small undergraduate program in Pueblo, Colorado. The Chicano MSW social workers in San Jose were limited to seven individuals, five in the Department of Social Services. Chicano social workers from the Department of Social Services had been active in the Department's Committee on Services to the Spanish Speaking and had been active pressing for more bilingual social workers to provide services to non-English speaking clients. A survey conducted by Vincent Lopez and Simon Dominguez throughout the Department found that 10% of the Spanish Surnamed clients were non-English speaking, monolingual Spanish speakers and this provided justification for the Director to authorize the hiring of bilingual social workers - a move not immediately supported by middle managers.

Another survey revealed that in 1967-68 the seven social work graduate schools in California had a mere 3% enrollment of Spanish surnamed students. Specially, the breakdown was: 1,185 students enrolled with only 43 Spanish surnames among them. The study also found only four Spanish surname faculty members and all four at San Diego State College and none with full time classroom teaching duties. In addition, there was not one Mexican American social work doctoral student in any School of Social Work in the United States. The implications of these numbers for an accelerated push for faculty development in Social Work Education seemed clear, and the challenge of developing a Chicano School of Social Work with so few faculty resources available seemed formidable. But idealism prevailed over more cautious minds.

Five of the more active MSW's were designated as those to represent the Chicano community and the University Committee to seek support from CSWE at the January 21-24, 1969 annual program meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. Armand Sanchez and Simon Dominguez, employees of the Department of Social Services were supported by the Director of the Department of Social Services, Fred Gillette; Manuel Fimbres was supported by his employer, the Social Planning Council; Paul Sanchez and Sal Alvarez were each supported by their respective employers as well. Of these five, none had a Ph.D., none had college teaching experience, one had been a high school teacher, four had graduated with an MSW in the past five years, and one had eight years of post-MSW experience.

APPROACHING THE COUNCIL OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION; January 21-24, 1969

These five Chicano MSW's went to the CSWE-APM not knowing how to make their appeal for support and consultation. They knew little about CSWE, how it was structured, its committees, or how decisions were made or priorities chosen. Numerous meetings were held with different social work educators, administrators, and members of CSWE to state our case and seek support.

At the General Assembly Pablo Sanchez informed the audience that we desired a consistent, close interaction with the audience. Then, directing himself to the previous speaker who had said these were troubled times, Sanchez stated this was nothing new to Mexican-Americans; we have had these troubles since 1847. As to the Mexican American and social work, he pointed out that there were 10 million Spanish-speaking people in the United States for whom social work as a profession did not exist. To emphasize this fact, he made reference to the programs at the Conference, with none of the subjects related to Chicanos. He also brought to their attention the small number of Mexican Americans present. It was obvious, he said, there was very little if no focus on Chicano problems and needs in the field of social work; therefore, he stated that in order for social work to become relevant to Mexican American, we present the following demands:

- 1) that Chicanos be appointed to the CSWE Board of Directors and to each Commission and Committee of the Council
- 2) that Chicanos be hired on the staff representing the Southwest and other parts of the nation.
- 3) that Chicanos make a review of all present accredited and non-accredited Schools of Social Work where they exist in Spanish speaking regions of the nation and that a review of curricula, administration, and student composition be made; and that future accreditation be contingent upon review.
- 4) that Chicanos who are consumers of service be involved in the decision making process of CSWE.
- 5) that two Chicano centers or Schools of Social Work in the nation be developed, one of which shall be located in California in which faculty and students can develop relevant curriculum for the social work profession.

To end the Group's participation at CSWE a resolution was presented to the House of Delegates at the end of the conference on January 29, 1969.. Only members of the House of Delegates could present resolutions so Luis Medina presented the following resolution written by Armand Sanchez on behalf of "The Caucus of Spanish Speaking Social Workers". It read:

Whereas, there has been a historical systematic exclusion of the Spanish Speaking Social Workers from meaningful participation in the profession of Social Work, and in the operation of the CSWE; and

Whereas, there exists a tremendous gap in services as well as delivery of services to the Spanish Speaking population in continental United States and Puerto Rico; and

Whereas, the Spanish Speaking representation has found a favorable climate and receptivity on the part of the staff and membership of CSWE: let it be

Resolved, that CSWE make a special effort to become informed regarding all facets of the problems of the Spanish Speaking in the USA as well as Puerto Rico.

Resolved, that the CSWE see, obtain and integrate into its components, Board, staff, commissions, and committees, meaningful representation of Spanish Speaking professionals.

Resolved, the CSWE establish a committee of Spanish Speaking Social Works to make a review of all present accredited and non-accredited schools of social work (where they exist in Spanish Speaking regions) and that a review of curriculum, administration, and student composition be made; and that future accreditation be contingent upon review.

Resolved, that the CSWE convene and underwrite a meeting in the near future of the Spanish Speaking Social workers.

Resolved, that CSWE make every effort within its power to lend its support, to utilize its resources, to expedite the establishment of schools of social work in which Spanish Speaking faculty and students may develop relevant curriculum for the social work profession.

The resolution passed with little debate. Most of the issues had been discussed with the Arnulf Pins, Executive Director of CSWE, prior to the House of Delegates meeting and a promise to assign Eileen Blackey of the University of California at Los Angeles as CSWE consultant to assist in developing the new program at San Jose State College.

Upon getting the resolution passed the five Chicano social workers and Dr. Juan Ramos compiled a list of Chicano social workers in five Southwestern states, planned to visit with them on the trip back to California, and to promote their support and participation in this new thrust in social work education.

Pablo Sanchez and Sal Alvarez stopped off in San Antonio on January 24th and met with Enrique Salinas, John Moore, Rodolfo Martinez, Miguel Bustamante, Sam Britto, and J. Richard Avena. They agreed to participate, name individuals for CSWE and support our demands with letters. Enrique Salinas was to be the local contact.

They continued on and stopped in El Paso, meeting briefly with Santiago Rodriguez. and on January 25th in Albuquerque they met with Annabelle Sanchez, Luis R. Losa, Frank Otero, Raul Leyba, and Richard Montoya. Each new group agreed to identify individuals for CSWE participation and to write letters of support. The local contacts would be Facundo Valdez of Espanola and Frank Otero.

On January 25, 1968 Armand Sanchez and Simon Dominguez stopped in Denver, Colorado meeting with Orlando Romero, Juan Cordova, Bernard Valdez, Charles Tafoya, Edward Trujillo and two second year students from the University of Denver. They also agreed to support the action and named Orlando Romero and Juan Cordova as the local contact persons.

Manuel Fimbres went to Phoenix, Arizona and on January 26, 1968 met with old friends; Miguel Montiel, Corazon Doyle, Vincent Doyle, and Joe Villa. Miguel Montiel was named the local contact person.

Dr. Juan Ramos followed up meeting with a group in Los Angeles. That group included Julie Ruiz Silva, Consuelo Lopez, Margarita Mendez, Helen Ramirez, Dolores Rodriguez, Chris Ruiz, Ray Santos and Ray Valle. Julie Silva, then Assistant Director of the All Nations Community Center in Boyle Heights was the convener and became the first TR coordinator in Los Angeles. That Trabajadores De la Raza organization is still in operation today.

BIRTH OF TRABAJADORES SOCIALES DE LA RAZA

Each group of Chicano MSW's contacted were already working on community issues, but were excited about the potential of social workers working together nationally. Concerns were similar as Chicano social workers in each community needed to press their Schools of Social Work to: recruit more Chicano students, recruit Chicano faculty, provide more financial support to Chicano students, develop field placements for Chicano students in their own community instead of in agencies serving white middle class clientele. In the February, 1969 newsletter from San Jose Chicano Social Workers to the various groups, the name of **Trabajadores Sociales de la Raza** was adopted for the first time, circulated nationally and became the rallying call for Chicano Social Workers to organize nationally. Paul Sanchez became the recognized national leader of the group and its spokesman. Some local groups decided to utilize Trabajadores de la Raza as their organizational name while others were already organized and used other names for their local organization.

Communication and advocacy continued among and between the various state Chicano social worker groups as they sought to awaken the consciousness of the social work profession through appeal to its national associations: CSWE, NASW, and NCSW. The major focus of activity, however, was with the Council on Social Work Education.

Planning was undertaken in March, 1969 for the agreed-upon follow-up CSWE conference to be held on May 9, 1969 in Burlingame, California with representatives of

Chicano social workers from throughout the Southwest, and Deans of the Schools of Social Work in the Southwestern states. A confrontation occurred at the Burlingame meeting because the Deans refused to commit themselves to any action, left the conference room and retreated to caucus in one of the Dean's room. The Chicanos/as attending this session, followed them, pushed themselves into this small motel room, locked the doors and demanded that the Dean's commit themselves to admit more Chicano students and to hire Chicanos professionals as faculty. A follow-up occurred at the CSWE meeting in Phoenix, Arizona in 1970, and again at the CSWE-APM in 1971 in Seattle.

From these various meetings and confrontations a number of significant events occurred by 1970. With pressure on CSWE from the local TR group a position was created for the first Chicano to be employed by CSWE. From the San Jose community, others were committed by family, so among the initial five Chicanos, the only person who was single and unattached, and able and willing to accept that position was Manuel Fimbres. He was to learn the policies and procedures by which new social work programs became accredited and to bring that information back for the development of the program at San José State University. The Schools of Social Work in the Southwest increased their efforts to recruit and enroll Chicanos in their MSW programs. U.C. Berkeley admitted three Chicanos in 1969 into their Ph.D. program: Sal Alvarez, Armand Sanchez, and Miguel Montiel of Arizona, and the following year David Maldonado and Juan Armendarez from Texas and Diane DeAnda.

The advocacy of Dr. Juan Ramos in NIMH resulted in several noteworthy events. CSWE was funded to initiate the first (and only) Chicano Faculty Development Program to facilitate the transition of Chicano practitioners to academia. The 16 participants of this first faculty development program were: Manuel Aguirre of Fresno, Eloy Apodaca of Seattle, WA; Matthew Camarillo of San Jose, Ismael Dieppa of USC, Simon Dominguez of San Jose, Francisco Godina of Sacramento, Ascencion Hernandez of Los Angeles (now of Kansas City), Valdemar Gonzales of Sacramento, Raul Leyba of Albuquerque (now of Phoenix), Miguel Montiel of San Jose State (now at ASU), Robert Peer of San Diego State, Santos Reyes of UT, Austin; Julie Ruiz of ASU (now at SJSU), Lucina Ruiz of Cal Poly; Armand Sanchez of San Jose, Joe Solis of U.C. Berkeley; and John Ulibarri of Weber State in Utah. The trainers were Richard Lodge of Virginia Commonwealth, Frank Pierce of Univ. Kentucky; and Luis Medina.

In addition, NIMH funded 1) the NIMH Teaching/Learning Center training grant for the MSW program at San Jose State directed by Armand Sanchez; 2) the East Los Angeles Mental Health Training Center jointly sponsored by the USC and UCLA Schools of Social Work directed by Ismael Dieppa, and 3) the Chicano Training Center in Houston, Texas directed by Fred Soufflee.

These were our beginnings. Some of the Latinos named here have made their contribution. Some have retired, others have passed on. We have completed 30 years of advocacy in social work education. What do we have to show for it. For the old timers, how many young Latinos have we mentored. For those new Latino professionals

reading these few lines, what will be your contribution? How many doors will you open for the next generation?

What we should notice, appreciate, and humbly respect is the tremendous contribution Dr. Juan Ramos has made to our collective and individual efforts to better address the conditions of Latinos in every state and in Puerto Rico. In his 30 years career at NIMH, and as part of our Latino community he has supported, advised, informed, directed, criticized, cajoled us all to do more, to be more involved, and, after making us feel guilty, to support us once again. Who will be the national leader to follow his footsteps? When he decides to step aside who will step forth?

Simon Dominguez 7/15/99