

Albert C. Ortega

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A Quasi-Role Model for the Chicano Graduate and Professional Student.....

Recently, the Chicano Graduate and Professional Student Organization once again became nascent<sup>of the tradition of the past</sup> after its demise two years ago. Presently, attempts are being <sup>made</sup> ~~undergone~~ <sup>Taken</sup> to establish a Chicano Alumni Association. The importance of these organizations should be obvious to all of the Chicano students and alumni of the University, yet their very survival is dependent on the participation and contributions of all the Chicano graduate and professional students and the alumni - nae. There are approximately seventy Chicano graduate students on the campus and at the last meeting of the Ch.G.&P.S.O. only ten of these were present. The excuses for not attending, as usual, were varied, but those <sup>excuses are</sup> expected. The same disease that killed the old Ch.G.&P.S.O. would seem to now be afflicting the present organization. The purpose of this article is not to castigate or even intimidate but to attempt to explain why we need to get involved at these levels.

What is the role of the Chicano graduate or professional student? Is it a perfunctory role of obtaining the M. A., Ph. D., M. D. or LL. B. without giving consideration to the obstacles that have prohibited the majority of our gente from reaching even the lowest levels of what is termed higher education? Most of us are here as tokens of this and other universities' attempts to pacify our brothers and sisters of the late 60's and early 70's who spent countless ~~many~~ hours marching, writing up demands, sitting-in, taking-over, being incarcerated, etc., etc. Unfortunately, many of us feel that we are here, in our present positions, solely because of our individual strivings, merits and achievements.

By virtue of being graduate and professional students, we have the clout to utilize this university to improve the educational opportunities, legal hassles, medical care, labor problems, etc., de nuestra raza. If we acknowledge that these problems are indeed extant, then it must be maintained that if properly organized we are in a propitious position to combat those institutions, specifically

the universities, that perpetuate these problems.

As a graduate student in Education I would like to develop a rationale for what I see as being a viable means by which to alleviate some of the burdens young Chicanos must carry. I am hopeful that others will write articles~~for~~ (I don't know the name of the MECHA paper - please insert) explaining what they feel are priorities in helping Chicanos. Education has the universal function of contributing to the perpetuation of cultures, transmitting their ideas from generation to generation, and preparing the young for active roles in the culture. Education must therefore be a reflection of the culture itself. Education in the United States, however, reflects the culture of middle-class America. As Chicanos, we should be cognizant of not only the failures of the university that we are attending, but we should also be cognizant of the failures of the lower schools <sup>that do</sup> to not give the slightest reflection of the Chicano culture. One would expect that education would have the task of preserving the cultural heritage of everyone through emphasis on cultural relativism, not to shape the student into that elusive mold we call the American Character. I would like to see an educational process that contrives a proper human being who embodies the core elements of the Chicano heritage. Many of the Chicano graduate and professional students have by virtue of being in the system so long, accepted the mores of the system and have lost touch with their proper communities. My task as an educator would therefore be to perpetuate those elements inherent in our culture that makes us different from the dominant society.

Education will help keep the minority groups together providing it is the instrument of the group to induct succeeding generations into their appropriate roles in the group. Education will provide Chicanos with social *aseguranza* against assimilation into the mainstream. As such, I fore see the CH.G.&P.S.O. as a <sup>USEFUL</sup> tool for the recruitment and training of new Chicano graduate and professional students <sup>who will</sup> to replace us in the future. By doing this, Chicanos will perpetuate the education of more Chicanos.

On the whole, I feel a responsibility toward finding ways of eliminating the barriers that prevent Chicanos from receiving a higher education. I see my role as a graduate student of Higher

education as not solely doing the perfunctory and sometimes ridiculous assignments that will eventually lead me to a Ph. D. and a lucrative job, but as a fomenter of change, change that will ameliorate the conditions which will enable my carnales and carnalas to reach the highest learning possible. I see my carnales that are now graduate students in Education as being the vanguards in inducing this change. It becomes our responsibility to induce change in higher education that will change the public school system that so effectively promotes the middle-class youth and systematically drops minority youth at every stage in the game. We must be the breaker of the vicious cycle that perpetuates a faulty system of education by placing ourselves, once graduated, in strategic positions along the entire scope of education. We, the Chicano students in education, along with other Chicano graduate and professional students, are best equipped to search out some of the answers to these problems, because we have experienced them too. The point is, we must not allow ourselves to remain idle, to forget our people just because we have fortunately, or unfortunately, reached this level. Remember carnales and carnalas, we are just tokens, an attempt on the part of various universities to pacify many of our brothers and sisters who had the foresight to see that Chicanos could be educated provided they were given the opportunity. We have been given the opportunity - now what? To this end we need the help and cooperation of each and every one of you.