

La Raza - - - Months Of Confusion

By Ray Steele, Jr.

The outbreak of violence yesterday on the Fresno State College campus culminated months of confusion over the La Raza Studies program.

The 18-month-old program was officially canceled Tuesday when Dr. Chester F. Cole, acting dean of the School of Social Sciences, said the college was unable to hire a faculty. However, the college has since made an offer to one instructor — an artist of Mexican ancestry — to teach courses this fall.

In canceling the program, Cole told faculty members in a memorandum the program faltered because of "deep philosophical differences among segments of the Mexican-American community . . ."

The differences of philosophy on how the program should be run have existed for many months but most college officials and members of the Mexican community agree the current issue developed last May.

That was when former Acting President Karl L. Falk announced all but one of the La Raza Studies faculty and only three of the Black Studies faculty were to be rehired. The decision touched off a series of campus demonstrations, culminating in the arrests of nearly 100 persons.

But both Falk and Baxter, when he took over July 15, pledged themselves to "bigger and better" Ethnic Studies programs when the fall semester started.

Additionally, reports by the State College Chancellor's Office staff and the staff of the Assembly Education Committee, which investigated the causes of the May disorders, suggested the appointment of faculty members to all Ethnic Studies programs be given high priority so that the community would know the programs were to continue.

Despite the reports and the public pronouncements, there was suspicion among members of the Mexican community, particularly by the organizations represented by the newly formed La Mesa Directiva, that the college would offer only a token program which was not in tune with the needs of the community.

There also was a fear and suspicion among some administrators that if off-campus groups had a major say in who was hired the program would be "dedicated to the disruption, if not the destruction," of the educational process, one administrator who preferred to remain anonymous said.

Those fears of the Americans of Mexican descent and those favoring the program grew as Philip N. Walker, acting dean of the former School of Arts and Sciences, remained as the per-

son to whom nominations for positions in the program had to be submitted before they were forwarded to higher levels.

Walker is considered by many minority students to be insensitive to their problems, and, along with Falk and Dr. James A. Fikes, acting executive vice president, was a focal point of criticism preceding and during the May disorders.

The problem of hiring a La Raza staff was soon recognized by Gene Orro, acting coordinator of the Ethnic Studies Program. Unlike Black Studies where there were three faculty members to consult in recommending new staff members, the lone La Raza staff member retained by the administration decided not to stay.

In the place of the La Raza faculty was substituted a committee consisting of Orro, Christine Bessard, a member of the Black Studies faculty; Dr. Jose Canales, FSC professor of history, and Dr. Jose Elgorriaga, FSC professor of linguistics to review the candidates for appointment. Canales later resigned and sent an eight-page letter to Baxter stressing some of the problems and his concerns about the program.

Knowing there was no faculty, students in last year's program joined with some off-campus organizations representing persons of Mexican descent to form La Mesa.

In a June 29 letter to Orro, the copresidents, Raul Pickett and Virginia Sanchez, said La Mesa wanted to be involved in all matters concerning La Raza Studies, "including the hiring and firing of faculty positions."

Further, the letter says La Mesa "will review all applicants seeking positions with La Raza and discourage any applicant to accept a position if he fails to meet the qualifications of the Mexican-American community."

In this context, Baxter assumed the presidency and asked Orro to "search, recruit and hire academically qualified" faculty members for all Ethnic Studies programs — La Raza, Black, Oriental, Native American and Armenian. Except for some minor problems, there were staff members hired for each program but La Raza.

Orro said he turned to persons of Mexican ancestry to help him pick a faculty and La Mesa "was the only group which offered to help." He said he told the group it could suggest candidates but would have no control over who was hired.

Pickett said the purpose of La Mesa, which represents at least 15 Mexican-oriented organizations, is to allow the Mexican-American community to have some say as to who was hired.

"We wanted people on the faculty who can relate to the Chicano community," he told The Bee. "We knew, and everyone we contacted knew, we

didn't have the power to hire or fire."

Orro said La Mesa suggested "about 10" names to him and he personally interviewed each. He said some of the candidates he interviewed he knew would not be acceptable to the administration so he did not submit their names for appointment. He said he submitted at least a half a dozen "highly qualified persons."

Orro said of the names suggested by La Mesa, only two were on the staff — both part-time — at FSC last year. He said only one of those applied but he took another job.

Mrs. Sanchez said La Mesa did not want to cause a confrontation or cancellation of the program as some administrators say they believe was the intent. "If we had wanted to force cancellation of the program, we would have submitted the names of the former staff," she said. "We could have insisted they hire Risco (Eliezer Risco-Lozada, director of the La Raza program last year). But we didn't because we wanted a program."

Baxter and other administrators, however, point to La Mesa's June 29 letter and to other letters as evidence the organization wanted control over the program the college cannot allow.

They admit that anyone can suggest names for appointment to the faculty, but only the college has the right to screen and hire applicants.

In the case of La Raza Studies, all but one or two of the applicants were interviewed by La Mesa people. They were asked such questions, Pickett said, as their feelings about Americans of Mexican descent, what they know about the San Joaquin Valley and its minority population, and problems and their views on the number of minorities dying in Vietnam.

He said La Mesa refused to submit the names of those who could not speak Spanish or who have not lived in the Mexican-American community in the past few years "because they don't know what's going on."

Orro said each name he suggested for hiring, "even some in other (FSC) Ethnic Studies programs," met with "resistance which approached harassment." He said nominations were returned, "three or four times, sometimes for such minor things as clerical errors."

Schorling said some nominations were returned because letters of reference, transcripts or work experience records were not complete.

Walker, who was responsible for accepting the nominations until reorganization of the school took effect Sept. 1 and Cole assumed command, said he received only one nomination

for a full-time position. He said he told Orro and other administrators he could not support it, but returned it to Orro "for further research." He did not publicly give any reasons for not supporting the nomination.

Walker said he went on vacation in mid-August "believing everything was going smoothly and a staff would be hired."

Cole took over and handled five nominations, he said. He forwarded one to Dr. Horace O. Schorling, acting academic vice president. The applicant turned down the offer. Cole said he did not approve one and three others were returned to Orro.

Orro charged Cole, Walker, Schorling and others with using unusual hiring practices, that "as many as 10-20 calls" were made to check out a candidate's qualifications, his philosophical outlook, "to see if he was the type that might cause trouble." Schorling, Cole and Walker deny that anything "but the standard hiring practices" were used.

Nonetheless, no one has been hired and Walker, Cole, Schorling and Baxter strongly imply it is because of the work of La Mesa.

For instance, when pressure was on last week to hire a staff, Schorling said he made nine job offers Friday and each was turned down.

Asked how La Mesa could have such communitywide, even nationwide effect on applicants, Schorling said, "It is beyond my comprehension."

He also said some persons of Mexican descent indicated at a meeting Baxter held with community leaders Wednesday they would be willing to teach to get the program started. Schorling said some were contacted the following day and each refused.

Both Baxter and Schorling said some of the possible candidates they talked to indicated they had been threatened not to accept a position at FSC. They said others gave no reason for not accepting a job.

Robert Arroyo, director of the Educational Opportunity Program at Fresno City College, who was contacted by FSC to accept a job, said he did not accept because there is a complete lack of definition of the program.

"It is a definition only the administration can give," he said. "I didn't know who was recommending me, what hurdles I had to cross to be hired. There is no indication the administration is looking to anybody in the community on who best should be hired."

Arroyo said he knows of some individuals who applied who never received confirmation their application had been accepted, usually a common courtesy.

"In my case, I was contacted only a week ago by Cole," he said. "I have a good job here and with the confusion about the program, I couldn't see leaving."

Canales, who would not release the contents of his letter to Baxter, attributed the breakdown in hiring a staff to all sides.

He said the administration "never came out and said this group was illegal." And he charged La Mesa is just an extension of the philosophy of Risco that a La Raza program should be active in the community.

However, he said La Mesa "provided us with candidates and all the blame is not on them." He also said there was "highly qualified" persons who agreed to accept a job at FSC but were not hired. Neither he nor anyone else could explain why.

College officials said they did not attempt to finesse La Mesa until this month.

"The search for applicants and hiring was left in Orro's control," said Walker. "We felt obligated to make sure there was not treatment of that program that is different from any other department on campus."

Baxter said the administration "has made serious attempts" to get others hired in the past two weeks. He said Cole, Schorling and others contacted a number of colleges and universities seeking qualified applicants. He said prospective faculty members responded they were not interested in taking a position at FSC. He said they gave no reasons.

Baxter said what is needed to get the program going is for the college to "know the kinds of people the broad Mexican-American community wants us to have."

"We need people who can interpret the need of the (Mexican-American) community for us, what the Mexican-American community really wants for their children . . . so the college can give minorities what is in their best interests."

"Some things are self destructive. The program last year was self destruction."



Phyllis George—Not too muscular.

Title Goes To Beauty From Texas

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Phyllis George, a brown-haired Texas beauty, modest about her figure, was named Miss America 1971 Saturday night.

The 21-year-old Texas Christian University senior who wants to get into broadcasting said she was afraid she had become "too muscular after six years of cheerleading."

"I was afraid my body wasn't feminine enough," said the 36-23-36 Miss America from Denton, Tex. After winning in the swimsuit competition Phyllis also said she had been afraid she was "too skinny" to win.

The brown-eyed 5-foot-8, 121-pound Miss America gave a piano rendition of "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head," but failed to win in talent, competition.

Miss Iowa, Cheryl Browne, was the first black contestant in the pageant's history. Although she failed to win preliminary talent competition, she was given a special award for her ballet dancing.

The runners-up in order were Miss South Carolina, Claudia Carmen Turner; Miss Maine, Karen Johanna Johnson; Miss Mississippi, Christine McClamroch, and Miss Pennsylvania, Margaret Walker.

Miss America has had professional experience doing television commercials, promotional films, and modeling.

Five semifinalists eliminated before the final choice was made were: Miss South Dakota, Mary Johanna Harum; Miss Oklahoma, Judy Adams; Miss Florida, Lisa Louise Donovan; Miss Arkansas, Donna Connelly; and Miss New York, Katherine Jean Karlsrud.

Reagan: No Problem

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ingerers," those who "seek to make poverty a profession." Welfare fraud, he said, "could be eliminated by better watchdogging," but the "real problem is not error, or even fraud, but the federal regulations that make fraud legal."

To the applause of the crowd, Reagan said the "working man and woman are paying premiums" to meet the medical bills of welfare recipients whose average medical costs, he said run \$518 a year, while in the same period the "average citizen" spends only \$247.

And the audience rose to its feet clapping when he described the Medi-Cal program as a "child left on my doorstep . . . And I ain't going to accept the blame."

Earlier in a brief press conference, the governor also referring to Medi-Cal, said he consid-

ers Unruh, the "runaway father of a child left on my doorstep."

And, he said, "if he wants to get into an argument over Medi-Cal and its faults, I'll top him."

However, he added, this did not mean he would accept Unruh's challenge to a debate, and again charged his opponent of campaigning with a "total disregard for the truth and the facts."

His statements, Reagan said, have been "untrue, including his housecalls."

After his speech, as the governor, smiling and visibly buoyed by the reception, started to leave the Convention Center for his flight to San Diego, a Kiwanian from Las Vegas, his eyes tearful, grabbed his hand.

"Ron, you're beautiful," he said emotionally. "You're beautiful. You're a beautiful man."