“Viva la raza”: Chicano student identity and activism at predominantly white midwestern universities, 1970-1979

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“VIVA LA RAZA”: CHICANO STUDENT IDENTITY AND ACTIVISM AT PREDOMINATELY WHITE MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITIES, 1970-1979

by

Carla Joann Gonzalez

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

May 2019

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Katrina Sanders
For my loving parents, Carlos and Esther. Thank you for always believing in me.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the identity and student activism engaged in by Midwestern Chicano students from 1970 to 1979 at four predominately white universities—The University of Iowa (UI); the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UM); the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW); and the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign (U of I). This dissertation is guided by the following questions 1) How did Chicanos in the Midwest form their Chicano identity during the 1970s? 2) How did Chicano students at predominately white Midwestern universities create spaces for themselves and agency during the 1970s?

Mexican American students who identified as Chicano not only challenged ascribed identities given by the Anglo Midwestern community, but they also challenged other Mexican Americans who could only view themselves through the lens of the Southwest. The concept of the Midwestern Chicano identity for university students illustrates how they were not considered “American” by the Anglo community, nor were they located geographically near the Southwestern homeland, but they were also unlike a traditional European immigrant; they were a hybrid of a conceptual Chicano identity that connected with the Southwestern region, called Atzlán, yet they instead identified with their Midwestern geographical location. This hybrid identity influenced how they made demands for greater recruitment of Chicano faculty, staff, and students, and the establishment of Chicano cultural centers and Chicano Studies departments.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

This dissertation, “Viva La Raza”: Chicano Student Identity and Activism at Predominately White Midwestern Universities, 1970-1979, specifically focuses on Chicano student activism, their understanding of their Midwestern identity, and how they created spaces for themselves at four predominately white Midwestern universities—The University of Iowa (UI); the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UM); the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW); and the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign (U of I) between 1970 and 1979. This dissertation’s central argument is that Chicano students at these four universities adopted a hybrid identity. They shared the Chicano ideology of reclaiming their Mexican heritage that was emerging in the Southwest because they also felt the negative effects that resulted from the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe. However, they also considered their regional identity because they had to shift the way they organized, demanded inclusion, sought visibility, and persisted at attaining their demands at these four institutions— and unlike in the Southwest, which was physically previously Mexico, the Midwest had no geographical ties to Mexico.

Additionally, Chicano students sought to be visible, not only to their local Midwestern Anglo American campuses and communities, but also to Chicanos in the Southwest. Lastly, due to the activism of Chicano students at these four institutions—especially during the early 1970s—future generations of Chicanos benefited from the increased recruitment of Chicano students and spaces to call home on campus through the creation of Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

The Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education (CCHE)
Chicano Indian American Student Union (CIASU)
Chicano Indian American Cultural Center (CIACC)
Chicano Student Coalition (CSC)
Council of Liberal Arts (CLA)
Council on Higher Education for Spanish Speakers (CHESS)
Equal Opportunity Program (EOP)
Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)
La Colectiva Latina (LCL)
La Raza Unida Political Party (RUP)
La Raza Unida Student Group (LRU)
Latin Liberation Front (LLF)
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Obreros Unidos (OU)
Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS)
Mexican American Movement (MAM)
Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO)
Movimiento Estudiantil, and Chicano de Aztlan (MechA)
Mujeres Latinas in Action (MLIA)
National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference (The Denver Conference)
Treaty of Guadalupe (The Treaty)
Urban Hispanic Organization (UHO)
United Farmworker’s Union (UFW)
University of Iowa (UI)
University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign (U of I)
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UM)
University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW)
United Mexican American Students (UMAS)
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the identity of Mexican American students who self-identified as Chicano at The University of Iowa (UI) located in Iowa City, Iowa; the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities (UM) found in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota; the University of Wisconsin (UW) in Madison; and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (U of I) to argue that they espoused a hybrid identity, influenced by both the Chicano ideology emerging out of the Southwest and their local contexts in the Midwest. The decade on which this dissertation focuses, the 1970s, coincides with the era of the Chicano Youth Movement, which started in the late 1960s and arose as an extension of the Chicano Movement.1 While the larger Chicano Movement focused on the economic, social, and political rights of Mexican Americans, and Mexican and Mexican American farmworkers, in particular, the Chicano Youth Movement focused primarily on the educational struggles of Chicano K–12 and university students and their quest for identity. Although Chicano student activism existed on Midwestern campuses, the majority of educational historical scholarship on the Chicano Youth Movement and its student activism focuses on the Southwest because key concepts of the movement began in states such as Colorado and California. For example, the Crusade for Justice’s National Chicano Conference debuted March 1969 in Denver, where national figure Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales shared El Plan de Atzlán—also called simply “El Plan”—the blueprint from which the Chicano identity and ideology emerged. El Plan called for Chicanos to reject assimilation into Anglo American society and reclaim their Mexican cultural heritage that was lost as a result of the U.S.

1. In this dissertation, “Chicano” describes students who enact the political ideology of reclaiming their Mexican cultural roots; they are technically Mexican Americans but additionally have a Chicano political consciousness. “Mexican Americans” are U.S. citizens of Mexican descent. “Mexican immigrants” refers to Mexicans from Mexico. The term “Anglo American” refers to U.S. citizens of European descent.
occupation of Mexico via the Treaty of Guadalupe (The Treaty) in 1848. According to El Plan, Chicanos had the right to maintain their cultural heritage in the Southwest because the land was originally Mexico, which they called “Atzlán.” The Santa Barbara Conference in California introduced El Plan de Santa Barbara in April 1969, that turned the spotlight to higher education and called for solutions to the inequities Chicanos faced on college campuses. It called for more Chicano Studies departments, Chicano cultural centers, and Chicano student, faculty, and staff recruitment.

Although the genesis of the Chicano student movement may have started in the Southwest, the Chicano students at the four universities chronicled in this dissertation also sought to assert their Mexican cultural heritage and called for greater Chicano representation at their Midwestern institutions. A 1971 passage from the UI Chicano student-created literary newsletter, El Laberinto, reflected their awareness and philosophy of a shared commonality with the Chicano identity called for at the 1969 Denver conference. The editor proclaimed:

Wherever there is an injustice committed against our people, the same thing happens to us. We are part of ourselves, and the rest of our carnals, and carnals are a part of us. We have always been united by a common heritage that evokes strong feelings of pride! We are mestizos . . . .

El Laberinto’s statement shows that despite being geographically distant from Atzlán, Chicano students at UI and the other three universities recognized a shared heritage with Chicanos across the nation that was predicated by their hybrid identity. This identity was based on The Treaty

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4. El Laberinto 1, no. 2 (November 1971), Box 1, Newsletter Series, El Laberinto Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Records of the Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. “Carnals” is Spanish for “brothers.”
because Chicano students in the Midwest experienced the effects of the U.S. acquisition of northern Mexico (currently the U.S. Southwest). The Chicano students at the UI and the three other universities however also embraced their regional Midwestern identities and understood those experiences were unique from those of Anglo Americans in the Midwest and/or Chicanos in the Southwest. This dissertation explores that synthesis experience and argues that Chicano students at these four universities adopted a hybrid identity that they utilized in their pursuit of educational equity. Like the growing Chicano ideology among Southwest Chicanos to reclaim Mexican heritage lost as a result of The Treaty, Midwest students also shared the Chicano ideology of reclaiming their Mexican heritage because they also felt the negative effects that resulted from The Treaty such as labor exploitation and Anglo American communities viewing them as second-class citizens. However, they also considered their regional identity since Midwest students came from an area that had no physical ties to Mexico; their regional identities influenced the way they organized, demanded inclusion, sought visibility, and persisted at attaining their demands at these four institutions. The activist efforts of Chicano students at these institutions during the early 1970s would contribute to the increased recruitment of Chicano students, establishment of Chicano Studies Departments, and cultural centers. These combined results contributed to the spaces that Chicano students on all four campuses could call home.

**Construction of Identity**

Identity has played a significant role in the Mexican American experience since the U.S. acquisition of Northern Mexico via the tenants of The Treaty in 1848 ascribed them legally as white, but Anglo Americans socially racialized them and treated them as non-white. Laura Gomez defines “racialization” as “how groups come to be identified and to identify themselves
in racial terms and learn their place as deserving or undeserving in the racial hierarchy.”

This social non-white identity created the Mexican American second-class citizenship experience in the social, political, economic, and educational spheres. To understand the root of educational oppression that both Midwestern and Southwestern Chicano university students fought on campuses, knowledge of how Anglo American society racialized and colonized Mexican Americans after The Treaty is essential.

After The Treaty was signed, Mexicans lost land and political power; Mexican Americans were forced into a second-class citizenship for retention as a source of cheap labor, and this was a contributing factor to the inferior education Anglo American controlled schools provided Mexican Americans before the Chicano Youth Movement. Chicano students who attended these four universities shared and recognized these effects of The Treaty because of their translocal background arising from Mexican American migrants moving from the Southwest to the Midwest for work. Therefore, the concept of translocal is important to this dissertation in order to understand the arguments made about Chicano students’ identities in the Midwest. The term “Translocal” references when “Emplaced communities become extended, via the geographical mobility of their inhabitants, across particular sending and destination contexts.”

These Chicano students’ hybrid identity developed from their heterogeneous background that included many Chicanos who were native born in the Midwest yet had parents from the Southwest or were from urban areas in the Midwest such as Chicago, Chicanos who migrated from the Southwest, and/or Chicanos who were both Southwestern and Midwestern due


to the cyclical labor networks that Mexican migrants endured. Whether Chicano laborers’ were in the Southwest or the Midwest, they experienced similar oppressive conditions of lower-pay and harsh working conditions.

Midwestern Chicano university students also attributed their educational oppression to a Eurocentric schooling system that was structured to assimilate immigrants—including Mexicans and Mexican Americans—to American culture.\textsuperscript{7} During the 1970s, Chicano students at these four predominately white universities in the Midwest rejected assimilating to Anglo American culture and put the responsibility for their educational inequity on the universities’ administrations. For example, in a letter to the UI’s administration dated May 1, 1973, members of the Chicano Indian American Student Union (CIASU) wrote, “The University of Iowa with a student population of 20,000 has only 60 Chicanos. We feel that the University of Iowa is a major contributor to the oppression and educational genocide of La Raza.”\textsuperscript{8} This passage reflected that the Chicano students at the UI believed that the educational system had forced assimilation in K–12 schools that resulted in the disappearance of their culture through educational “genocide.” Additionally, Chicano students represented a small portion of the UI’s campuses, even though two million Mexican Americans lived in the Midwest by 1970, and the Mexican American population in Iowa was 21,017.\textsuperscript{9} Chicano students saw the low Chicano


\textsuperscript{8} “Chicano Indian-American Student Union Letter Given to President Willard Boyd in Person,” May 1, 1973, box 7, Chicano Indian American Cultural Center (CIACC) and Chicano American Indian Student Union (CIASU) General-1973-1987 folder, coll. IWA0188, Nancy V. “Rusty” Barceló papers, Iowa Women’s Archives, The University of Iowa. La Raza is Spanish for “the people” includes Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos.

representation at the UI as a reflection of their educational institution’s failure to meet the needs of the population, and they did not idly wait for it and other Midwestern universities to change.

Despite the small groups of Chicanos on these campuses, they believed they had cultural distinctions that were different from the Anglo American community and that their culture was important to promote and maintain. They organized and made demands to increase the Chicano student representation and establish Chicano Studies departments and Chicano cultural centers to ensure their universities would be aware of their culture and make changes to include their Chicano identity. To explore the Chicano student identity at these educational institutions in the Midwest and how Chicano students engaged in student activism by challenging the dominant structures at the UM, UW, U of I, and UI, this study sought to answer two questions: (1) How did Chicano students who attended Midwestern institutions make meaning of their identity in both national and Midwestern contexts?, and (2) How did these students’ understanding of Chicano identity play a role in their creation of spaces on their campuses? The following will provide the historiography, theoretical framework, procedural analysis, and chapter outlines for this dissertation.

**Historiography**

Educational historian Christopher Tudico is one of the few scholars who has analyzed the way Latino education is researched.\(^\text{10}\) He argues that the reason for the dearth of Latino educational history is that “when educational historians discuss the challenges and opportunities of conducting research on race within our field, they often do so through the lens of the black

\(^{10}\) Christopher Tudico uses the pan-ethnic term “Latino” not Chicano, so here I use Latino to match his word choices. “Latino” encompasses Mexican Americans but also individuals with origins in Latin American countries, including Brazil but not Spain. “Hispanic” is the U.S government-ascribed identity to define individuals from Latin American countries, including Spain but not Brazil.
white binary.” Additional, Tudico boldly asserts that there has not been much published on the history of Latinos in higher education because there is a Hispanophobia that “currently affects historians of higher education,” so the information instead resides outside this field. He notes that there are more studies on Latino history in the field of American history, which he describes as no longer “afflicted with an actuate case of Hispanophobia.” I agree with Tudico’s assessment because it is apparent from the limited research on Latinos in higher education by educational historians in general. For example, educational historian Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr.’s historiography of the state of Chicano education in 1986 primarily uses sources outside educational history that focus on the Southwest. While there are more scholars of Chicano and Latino education over thirty years later, their work is still limited. In this historiography, I make the following arguments: (1) In the limited history of Chicano education, the scholarship reveals a focus on K–12 educational histories primarily in the Southwest; (2) Research of the history of Chicano higher education reveals gaps because there are limited historical studies; and (3) There


13. Ibid.


needs to be more inclusion of Chicano educational histories beyond K–12 and outside the Southwest in areas such as the Midwest.

**K–12 Chicano Educational Scholarship**

San Miguel evaluated the state of Chicano educational research in 1986 and found that it was “still in its embryonic state of development, and much more needs to be done before we can accurately assess its nature.” To date, Chicano educational research continues to remain in its emergent state with a clearer, but not yet full picture of the Chicano educational experience. During the 1980s and 1990s, educational historians of Chicano education focused on challenging previous educational histories that depicted Mexican Americans as passive victims in the K–12 schooling systems who were willing to receive inadequate education via the Americanization curriculum Anglo controlled schools gave them. The works of three educational historians made Chicano educational histories more visible to the history of education in general: San Miguel, Ruben Donato, and Gilbert Gonzalez. San Miguel covers the period of the Mexican American educational experience in Texas from 1910–81, Donato covers the 1960s and 1970s in California, and Gilbert Gonzalez covers 1900–75 in the Southwest. However, all three trace a common theme: the segregation of Mexican American and Chicano students due to oppressive

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18. San Miguel, Jr., “Let All of Them Take Heed”; Ruben, The Other Struggle for Equal Schools; Gonzalez, Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation. The American GI Forum was a Mexican American formed group by World War II veterans to assist with the integration of their members. It also had an assimilationist ideology.
educational policy. They also demonstrate how Mexican Americans challenged these oppressive educational structures through legal channels and visible protests.

San Miguel’s work looks at the Mexican American struggle for equal schooling in Texas, the leadership of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American GI Forum, and how Mexican Americans challenged discriminatory educational practices. He demonstrates how Anglo American educational leadership created school segregation of Mexican Americans and how this segregation led to a dominant–subordinate relationship between Mexican American and Anglo American communities through K–12 education. Gilbert Gonzalez’s work also looks at segregation but focuses on how the political economy shaped social relationships between Mexican American and Anglo American communities. Gilbert Gonzalez argues that school administrators used intelligence quotient (IQ) testing, an Americanization curriculum, and vocational education to keep Mexican Americans in a lower socioeconomic status and “reflected the specific economic interests of white communities throughout the Southwest.” Donato challenges the black–white binary and showcases how Mexican Americans also had their own civil rights movement and were not passive victims who accepted their educational fate. He agrees with the arguments Gilbert Gonzalez outlines in Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation—namely, that Anglo American controlled schools sought to maintain social control of Chicanos through education. Donato builds on Gilbert Gonzalez’s work by showcasing how Chicanos resisted their educational segregation. The

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20. San Miguel, Jr., “Let All of Them Take Heed.”

contributions these three authors make to the Chicano educational history canon are the foundation to understanding educational and community activism within the Mexican American/Chicano communities and the rise of both the Chicano Movement and the Chicano Youth Movement. However, their works focus on the oppressive K–12 educational structures, Chicano high-school student activism, and Southwest states such as Texas and California. My study concurs with all their arguments about how Chicanos students were not passive victims of the educational system and actively pushed it to transform, but it extends this argument to Chicanos in higher education and in Midwestern states. It also addresses additional identities that come from being in or from the Midwest.

There is at least one comprehensive exploration of Chicano educational experiences in the Southwest in the article “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest” by San Miguel, Jr. and Richard R. Valencia, which explores four eras: (1) Mexican American education in the Southwest from 1848–90; (2) the expansion of Mexican American education from 1890–1930; (3) the changing character of public education from 1930–60; and (4) the contemporary period (the 1990s). They argue that Mexican Americans (by the 1990s) were in an educational crisis due to their lower academic performance, which was concerning because the Mexican American population had significantly increased in the Southwest. To date, there are no similar comprehensive


23. Valencia and San Miguel, Jr., “From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood,” 382. They note that in 1995 the gap was thirty percent—eighty-three percent for white students versus fifty percent for Mexican American students.

24. Ibid., 392.
educational histories of Mexican American and/or Chicano educational experiences in the Midwest. Additionally, Valencia and San Miguel refer to higher education via the *Hopwood v. State of Texas* (1996) case, but they do not explore Mexican Americans in higher education generally. Mexican American and Chicano scholarship regarding the history of higher education is especially sparse.

**Chicano Higher-Education Scholarship**

While many contemporary educational studies discuss Chicanos in higher education, they usually focus on the achievement gap between Chicano students and their white peers in K–12 and lack of access or degree attainment in higher education. But research that explores the historical Chicano experiences in higher education is scarce. There are few studies on Chicano experiences in higher education before the 1960s. For example, not much is known about the entrance of Chicanos into higher-education institutions outside California. In Tudico’s dissertation “Before We Were Chicanas/os: The Mexican American Experience in California Higher Education, 1848,” he examines the education of Mexican Americans after The Treaty but before the Chicano Movement. He constructs a history of the “children of Californios (wealthy

25. Ibid., 392. *Hopwood v. State of Texas* (1996) was a case of Cheryl Hopwood, a white woman not admitted to the University of Texas school of law. She filed a suit claiming discrimination based on the use of race in the law school’s admission process.

landholders who stressed their ‘Spanish’ heritage)’ who attended Santa Clara College, the
College of Notre Dame, and preparatory programs at the University of California. He argues that
this access to education allowed them to maintain their elite social station in Californian
society.27 Another scholar who examines Chicano and Latino educational history is Victoria–
Maria MacDonald. Like San Miguel’s and Valencia’s article above, MacDonald
comprehensively examines Latino education in the chapter titled “Historical Perspectives on
Latino Access to Higher Education, 1848–1990” and also in her book Latino Education in the
United States: A Narrated History from 1513–2000. Both briefly summarize Latino participation
in higher education, but she calls for additional study on this subject in her chapter, and the
narrative history in her book is focused primarily on K–12. In general, most historical education
research on Chicano youth focuses on Chicano students’ fight for access to education in K–12,
especially during the Chicano Movement. Also, most examinations of the Chicano Youth
Movement are by scholars of Chicano history within the field of Chicano Studies rather than
educational historians.

The Chicano Movement and Chicano Youth Movement

Scholars of Chicano history such as Rodolfo Acuña and Arturo Rosales have created
general surveys that narrate the entire history of Chicanos and Mexican Americans, within which
Chicano identity is a vital discussion.28 Acuña and Rosales present the development of Mexican
American political identity from Mexican immigrant to Mexican American and from Mexican
American to Chicano. These identity shifts were driven by external factors such as the effects of

27. Tudico, “Before We Were Chicanas/os,” vi.
28. Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America: The Chicano’s Struggle Toward Liberation, (San Francisco: Canfield Press, 1972); Rosales, Chicano!, 173.
The Treaty—when Mexicans became Mexican Americans when the U.S. annexed Northern Mexico. The establishment of LULAC in 1929 shifted the ideology of the Mexican American to the political identity of Mexican-American—those who promoted assimilation into Anglo American society to distance themselves from their Mexican immigrants and their Mexican heritage. By the 1960s, some Mexican Americans shifted to the Chicano identity, which is also a political identity. The Chicano identity rejected the prior Mexican Americans’ promotion of assimilation in favor of connecting with their indigenous background in Atzlán. 29 Scholars of Chicano history point to Corky Gonzales presenting *El Plan Espiritual* at the National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in March 1969 for the emergence of the Chicano identity. 30

Until the Chicano Youth Liberation Conference, Chicano youth had never come together to explore their identity. 31 Gonzales challenged young people to see themselves not as a minority group but as “a people with a distinct name, language, history, and culture.” 32 Gonzales also gave a new meaning to the word “Chicano,” which had long been a derogatory term among many Mexican Americans. For the first time, the term implied a political awareness and sense of cultural pride. Gonzales also gave Chicano students a spiritual and political homeland by reclaiming Atzlán. 33 Yet, Acuña and Rosales, along with other scholars of Chicano history and Chicano Studies, focus the Chicano Movement and identity analysis on a male, heterosexual,


32. Ibid., 94.

33. Ibid.
working class, and the politically active person, to the exclusion of Chicano feminists, gays, lesbians, and other identities. However, other scholars have attempted to remedy these gaps.

In terms of Chicanas within the history of the Chicano Movement, ¡Chicana Power!: *Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement*, edited by Maylei Blackwell, contains a series of essays that reinsert the history of Chicanas into the Chicano Movement. Alma García’s article, “The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse, 1970–1980,” attributed the rise of Chicana feminism to the Chicano Movement because Chicanas were looking for “room of their own” during this era. *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, edited by Alma Garcia, includes a chapter by Sonia A. Lopez entitled, “The Role of the Chicana Within the Student Movement,” where Lopez argues Chicanas were still filling traditional roles of Mexican culture such as caring for children and family and in the youth movement they were regaled secretarial roles. Chicanas then began to group together to search for solutions to the oppression they felt by their male counterparts during the movement at their universities. My dissertation adds to this discussion by looking at how Chicanas in these four


37. Ibid., 219.

38. Lopez, “The Role of the Chicana Within the Student Movement”, 105.
universities were able to move beyond the traditional roles expected of Mexican women and become leaders on their campuses.

Other scholars, such as George Mariscal in his book titled *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965–1975*, tie the complexity of Chicano Movement to national and global movements. He examines the complexity of the Chicano identity and argues that it was influenced by national and global developments that included “rise of the Third world anticolonial struggles, [and] “national liberation movements” within the United States.”

Finally, Juan Gomez–Quinones and Irene Vasquez’s book, *Making Atzlán: Ideology of Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966–1977*, gives a complete analysis of the Chicano quest for identity in the political, social, global, and educational spheres. Gomez–Quinones and Vasquez argue that the Chicano movement evolved from “a conglomeration of individuals, organizations, and movements and their actions and mobilizations.” They give an in-depth view of how Chicano Movement activists developed “a diverse range of agendas, objectives, strategies, approaches, ideologies, and identities.” Studies about the Chicano Youth Movement’s history are often chronicled within the contexts of the general Chicano Movement, and they focus on the rise of student activism in the Southwest.

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42. Ibid., xxv.

43. Ibid.
The Chicano Youth Movement

Chicano Studies scholars who examine the Chicano Youth Movement tie the educational revolution for Chicano students to the high-school student walkouts called “the blowouts.” In *Marching Students: Chicana and Chicano Activism in Education, 1968 to the Present*, edited by Margarita Berta–Ávila, Anita Tijerina Revilla, and Julie López Figueroa, the authors argue that high schools were the first spaces where Chicano student activism was displayed when an estimated ten thousand Chicano students walked out of five Los Angeles high schools where the populations were overwhelmingly Mexican American. Sal Castro, a Chicano teacher and activist at Lincoln High School, was credited for organizing the Chicano student strike, and there is a book that chronicling his life and activism. Other studies examine the importance of the Chicano Youth Movement to the overall Chicano Movement. In Acuña’s work discussed above, he argues that the Chicano Youth Movement did not play as big of a role in the Chicano movement as other scholars. In Gomez–Quiñones’s article, “Mexican Students por la Raza: The Chicano Student Movement in Southern California, 1967–1978,” he argues that the Chicano Youth Movement in California was central to the Chicano political scene. In his 1989 book, *Youth Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, Carlos Muñoz, Jr. was the first to write about Chicano youth activism.

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47. Acuña, *Occupied*.

these student power movements.\textsuperscript{49} He argues the Chicano Youth Movement was integral part of the overall youth rebellion of the 1960s, noting that the “Chicano student movement and the large Chicano power movement was a quest for a new identity and for political power.”\textsuperscript{50} In \textit{Mexican American Youth Organization: Avant-Garde of the Chicano Movement in Texas}, Armando Navarro argues that Chicano youth added the “militantization” to the Chicano Movement and that the “youth in the barrios and universities of Atzlán . . . became the avant-garde of the CM.”\textsuperscript{51} According to Navarro, Chicano youth became the most powerful force of change: “through their dedication, sacrifice and idealism they helped awaken and politicize a Chicano community caught in a quasi slumber of internal colonialism.”\textsuperscript{52}

Other studies examine how Chicano youth developed their Chicano identity, and most point to the Denver conference in 1969 where Corky Gonzales introduced \textit{El Plan} as the source where the Chicano ideology and identity emerged.\textsuperscript{53} According to Delgado, \textit{El Plan} was part of Chicano youths’ identity formation because of their desire to recapture their Mexican heritage and celebrate revolutionary heroes.\textsuperscript{54} Delgado argues that \textit{El Plan} represented “articulations of Chicano ideology and identity, designed to facilitate the goals of the movement: social justice

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{50} Muñoz, Jr., \textit{Youth, Identity, Power}, 27.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Armando Navarro, \textit{Mexican American Youth Organization: Avant-Garde of the Chicano Movement in Texas} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), x.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Delgado, “Chicano Movement Rhetoric,” 446.
\end{itemize}
and cultural nationalism.”55 David Gutiérrez agrees with Delgado and explains that El Plan marked “an important turning point in young Chicanos’ ongoing efforts to redefine their conception of a collective Chicano identity and to build a political program based on that identity.”56 Gutiérrez argues that Chicano youth presented a nationalist vision of the Chicano identity, which “dismissed the notions of “Americanization” and “Assimilation” as nothing more “…than “Gabacho” (a derisive term for Anglo) attempts to maintain hegemony over Chicanos by destroying their culture.”57 These scholars reference higher education and focus their discussions on how Chicanos established Chicano Studies as a field of study and Chicano Studies departments as a unit of study.

Many Chicano Studies scholars examine these contributions of Chicano student activism and explore how student groups such as United Mexican American Students (UMAS), the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), the Mexican American Movement (MAM), and the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) began to organize in universities in California and Texas.58 In The Making of Chicana/o Studies: In the Trenches of Academe, Acuña argues that Chicano Studies played a role in the dramatic transformation of the study of Mexican Americans in the United States, noting that “Before December 31, 1970, not a single dissertation was written under the category of “Chicano”…Under “Mexican American”, a

55. Ibid., 447.
56. Gutiérrez, “Sin Fronteras?,” 14
57. Ibid.
search reveals 82 dissertations were written before 1971…”59 His history of the establishment of Chicano Studies departments primarily examines the University of California, and Acuña and other Chicano Studies scholars generally look at universities in California to discuss the establishment of the field of Chicano Studies. Acuña only mentions the Midwest with a superficial history of the establishment of UM’s Chicano Studies program in a few paragraphs. In my dissertation, I add a more in-depth history of UM’s Chicano Studies department and follow Chicano student activism at UM until the late 1970s.

In “Three Decades of Latina/o,” Chicano Studies scholar Pedro Cabán chronicles the shift of Chicano Studies into Latino Studies.60 He argues “a detailed, historical, grounded comparative analysis of the beginnings and evolution of Chicano, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican Studies need to be written.”61 In “The Development of Chicano Studies, 1968–1981,” Carlos Muñoz, Jr. argues that “Chicanos Studies was and is largely a California product” because the first Chicano Studies department was established by California State College at Los Angeles in 1968.62 By 1984, nineteen Chicano Studies programs had been founded in the University of California and California State systems.63 Thus, most of the literature on the Chicano Youth Movement is from the perspective of Southwest. In their comprehensive history of Chicanos, Acuña’s and Rosales’s inclusion of the Midwestern experience is limited. Rosales sums it up in single sentence: “By 1969 a network of moviemento participants spread across the southwest and


even reached into the Chicago area.”64 This dissertation seeks to add to the discourse on Chicano university activism by including four institutions in the Midwest and providing an in-depth look at their Chicano students.

The history of student activism for other students of color is found with general social and civil rights movement histories such as the African American Civil Rights Movement, Asian American Movement, and Native American Movement.65 For the Asian American and Native American movements, there are very limited studies youth-focused studies, but note the contribution of the youth to their movements. Asian American youth were a part of the Third-World Liberation Front and their activism at San Francisco State College aided in the establishment of the first Ethnic Studies department in the country.66 Native American youth formed the National Indian Youth Council, which aided in the Native American fight for equity in society.67 African Americans have more youth scholarship, but there are still only a handful of studies that focus on African American student activism and/or black campus activism at the college level. More contemporary studies on black campus activism include Wayne Glasker’s *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967–1990*, which examines the black student movement at the University of Pennsylvania and

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64. Rosales, *Chicano!*, 170.


66. Umemoto, “On Strike!” The Third World Liberation Front was a coalition of Black Students Union, the Latin American Students Organization, the Filipino American Collegiate Endeavor, the Filipino-American student organization, the Asian American Political Alliance, and El Renacimiento, a Mexican American student organization formed at San Francisco State University to call for campus reform.

how Black Power ideology influenced their activism. He notes that they were not cultural separatists but rather advocated for their own spaces on campus.68 Ibram X. Rogers’s study of black activism, *The Black Campus Movement: The Radical Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965–1972*, examines how black activists were part of higher-education change and “successfully alter[ed] the racial dynamics of higher education.”69 Rogers’s study is distinctive because he provides a comprehensive examination of black student activism at both historically black and predominately white colleges across the nation. In *The Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965–75*, Joy Ann Williamson studies black activism at the U of I and chronicles the students’ struggle for recognition and access.70 She argues that black student activists were unique at the U of I because the town of Urbana–Champaign was “southern in its attitudes toward race,” and the activists had “an unusual amount of influence on the nature of reform at Illinois and were invited to participate in university recruitment efforts and sit on university committees.”71 This dissertation also contributes to the study of youth movements for students of color during their respective civil rights movements by focusing on student activism beyond the black–white binary. It also complements Rogers’ and Williamson’s works by adding voices to the literature that are more nuanced in a major student movement. Like Williamson, I seek to uncover the Chicano student experience in the Midwest, but this dissertation examines multiple campuses.


Inclusion of Chicanos in the Midwest

In her chapter “Atzlán in the Midwest,” Sandra Gonzales argues, “Midwestern Chicano identities and experiences are at the margins of Southwestern Chicano scholarly research.”\textsuperscript{72} In the general history of Chicanos, there are few studies on the Chicano Midwestern experience. The focus has been on two major themes: (1) challenging the notion that Chicanos only existed in the Southwest; and (2) emphasizing that Latino demographics in the Midwest are new and growing rapidly, so geographical changes to this area of study are necessary. Most Chicano historical scholarship has focused on the Southwest as part of a “homeland thesis” which emphasizes Mexican history within the narrow region of the Southwest where Mexicans lived at the time of the U.S. conquest.\textsuperscript{73}

Mexican Americans in the Midwest are not seen as a colonized people affected by The Treaty due to their geographic distance from Aztlán.\textsuperscript{74} Instead, scholars of Chicano history paint a picture of Mexican Americans as immigrants to the Midwest. Scholars describe Midwestern assimilation patterns similar to the Anglo American model, dubbing Midwestern Mexican Americans the “last of the immigrants” whose assimilation will occur within the passing of generations.\textsuperscript{75} Lilia Fernandez’s book \textit{Brown in the Windy City} also incorporates this “last of the immigrants narrative,” arguing that Mexican and Puerto Rican identities were formed in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{73} Dinicio Valdés, \textit{Barrios Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 18.
\item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 18.
\end{itemize}
response to discrimination and explaining that “unlike in the Southwest, where Mexicans had a much longer history and greater presence, Mexicans in Chicago were not a colonized population on ancestral lands: they were immigrants like so many others in the past.”\textsuperscript{76} This quote illustrates how Chicanos in the Midwest were not considered a colonized people. Yet Dinicio Valdés’s brilliant work \textit{Barrio Norteños: St. Paul and Midwestern Mexican Communities in the Twentieth Century} challenges this view and contests the idea that Midwestern Mexican Americans assimilate like European immigrants do within the passing of a generation. He asks, “If Mexicans have successfully assimilated in the 1920s, why are they still perceived as the last of the immigrants and living in the same barrios three generations later?”\textsuperscript{77} In her dissertation “Anti-colonialism in Michigan,” Nora Salas examines the labor exploitation and racialization of Mexicans and Mexican Americans working as pickle harvesters in Michigan and argues that these laborers felt—because of the “migrant” label—that they were treated as a “conquered people regardless of their physical location.”\textsuperscript{78} Although her dissertation is about Mexican and Mexican American labor, one section describes how Southwestern national figures such as Carlos Guerra—representing MAYO—was a featured speaker at the Chicano Youth Conference at Michigan State University in April of 1970. She notes that Guerra shifted his rhetoric to fit the Midwestern context when he proclaimed to the audience, “If we in the Southwest are migrants, its not because we migrated north, but that the border migrated south.”\textsuperscript{79} My study also explores

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{77} Valdés, \textit{Barrios Norteños}, 18.
  \item \textsuperscript{78} Nora Salas, “Anti-colonialism in Michigan” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2015), 8
\end{itemize}
the Southwestern rhetoric shift to fit Midwestern contexts. It builds on Salas by continuing the argument that due to their diminished labor rights, Chicanos felt they were a part of a colonized group in the Midwest, but I extend her connection further into the higher-education realm because I focus more on how labor and education were connected for Chicano students.

More recent studies on the Mexican American experience in the Midwest include *Latinos in the Midwest*, edited by Ruben O. Martinez, and *The Latina/o Midwest Reader*, edited by Omar Valerio–Jimenez, Santiago Vaquera–Vasquez, and Claire Fox. *Latinos in the Midwest* focuses on the labor aspect of Latino experience. The editors pose questions such as, “Who will fill the void in the labor force left in the wake of the baby boomers’ departure?” They recognize the relationship between labor and education, inquiring, “How wills the United States maintain a competitive economy if its educational intuitions are unable to meet the educational needs of Latino studies?”

*The Latina/o Midwest Reader* is also a series of essays, but its goal is to “challenge the notion that Latinas/os are newcomers to the Midwest” and “emphasize that Latinas/os have resided in the region for over a century, and that Latinas/os contributed the social, cultural, and economic dimensions of rural and urban Midwestern communities.” It also contains essays dedicated to education that examine contemporary language and parental involvement. Yet there is one essay—“Studies and Ethnic Studies in the Midwest” by Amelia María de la Luz Montes—that is a narrative about her experiences as a professor in the Midwest and negotiating for a Latino Studies program as the director of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s (UNL) Institute.

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for Ethnic Studies. It provides a contemporary insight into the administrative perspective of building a Latino Studies program but has a limited student perspective.\textsuperscript{82}

Much is unknown about the Mexican American educational history in the Midwest, and many questions remain. The K–12 experiences of Midwestern Mexican American population are also largely unexplored. The limited number of dissertations I have discovered offer glimpses into this history; for example, Theresa Garcia’s work shows how Mexican students in Fort Madison, Iowa were segregated from other school children and educated in one-room schools. She finds that while some found the instruction beneficial, others felt that it hindered their integration into the school community.\textsuperscript{83} Another dissertation by Caran Amber Crawford Howard argues that the Mexican community regarded education highly and consciously sought out “formal,” “non-formal,” and “informal” education to make education work for themselves and their communities.\textsuperscript{84} Lastly, Carlos Rios Pérez’s dissertation explores how Mexican Americans resisted the Americanization process through alternative spaces. He explores how Mexicans who settled in Chicago were not easily classified because they “could be too Indian to some, white or too African to others,” so their racial ambiguity allowed them to be viewed in range of ways that gained then social privileges that were usually reserved for the white community.\textsuperscript{85}


\textsuperscript{83} Teresa A. Garcia, “Mexican Room: Public Schooling and the Children of Mexican Railroad Workers in Fort Madison, Iowa, 1923–1930” (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2008).

\textsuperscript{84} Caran Amber Crawford Howard, “‘I've Always Been for Education’: Mexicana/o Participation in Formal, Non-formal, and Informal Education in the Midwest, 1910–1955” (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 2015), 2. Crawford Howard uses these terms in her dissertation. She defines formal as public schools, informal as familial and community education, and non-formal as settlement houses and churches.

In addition to knowledge gaps in the K–12 system, not much is known about Midwestern Chicano histories in higher education. What is known comes from references in American history books and dissertations.  

Most works on Chicano Midwestern educational history focus on Chicago. Leonardo Ramirez’s book *Chicanas of 18th Street: Narratives of a Movement from Latino Chicago* includes descriptions of student activism in the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago. The narratives note that the Pilsen area of Chicano had junior colleges where students organized groups such as the Organization of Latin American Students (OLAS) and aided in the community. OLAS group members worked with secondary schools and had a presence at a local high school. Once these students transferred to a four-year university, they began new student organizations and proved their leadership to more Chicago students.

Other dissertations and theses I found include a master’s thesis that explores the student movements in Nebraska and a dissertation by Sandra Solis, who explores how various social movements such as antiwar movements, the Chicano Movement, the American Indian Movement, and the women’s movement influenced the Chicano students who founded the Chicano and Indian American Student Union at The University of Iowa in the early 1970s. Solis employs a borderland framework and states that a borderland identity is not limited to “any one geographical area but is one defined by context.” There is a gap in the history of Chicano education in that it does not include the history of Chicanos in Midwestern locales or their experiences in higher education; this dissertation hopes close this gap by focusing on Chicano

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89. Sandra Solis, “‘To Preserve Our Heritage and Our Identity’: The Creation of the Chicano Indian American Student Union at The University of Iowa in 1971” (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 2011), 45.
student experiences in higher education during the 1970s. Writing in 1986, San Miguel describes how there is no comprehensive book regarding the educational experiences of the Chicano—and there is still no comprehensive book regarding the educational experiences of the Mexican Americans and Chicanos in the Midwest and/or other areas outside the Southwest today.

**Significance**

Although this dissertation focuses on the Midwest, I do not argue that the effects of colonization from the Treaty, labor exploitation of Mexican and Mexican Americans, or Chicano student activism outside the Southwest is something that only occurred to Chicanos in the Midwest. If the literature regarding Chicanos in the Midwest is scant, then the literature regarding Chicanos in other areas outside the Southwest is even sparser. Other areas such as the East Coast are traditional destinations for other Latino ethnicities such as Puerto Ricans, and their populations of Mexican Americans and Chicanos are historically significantly smaller.90 The little research that studies Mexican American migrations to locations outside the Southwest and Midwest are more contemporary and make similar arguments to those about the Midwest—that Mexican Americans are a newer population in areas such as the East Coast and South, that they are changing the way these areas function, and that they migrated to the area to find additional employment opportunities.91

I chose to look at the Midwest because during the decade I examine, it had the second-highest population of Mexican Americans, yet limited scholarship as Martinez notes, “despite the


scholarly work that has been done on Latinos in the Midwest, a coherent body of research has not yet emerged, and given the population changes of the past three decades, much more remains to be done.” As Martinez implies, the literature pertaining to Mexican American experiences offers only a limited understanding of the contributions Chicanos made in the Midwest not only through their labor but also to the educational systems. I chose the UI, UM, UW, and U of I because they are geographically far from the United States–Mexico border, and I wanted to know why a university such as UM would have a need for a Chicano Studies department. Also, despite the established presence of the Chicano population in the Midwest since the early 1900s, the Midwest is still depicted as “a White American experience,” which Sujey Vegas’s work challenges.

In music and film, Midwestern places are static and homogenous; as Vega illustrates, “indeed, the state [(Indiana)] prides itself as the quintessential middle of America; the place of “traditional” American dreams where white residents just so happen to prevail. Caught in this warped nostalgia, Indiana’s people of color become simultaneously erased.” Thus, it is imperative to add the Midwestern Latino experience to any understanding of the Midwest. Vega argues that “adding Latinos to the mix adds complexity to Midwestern spaces” and the inclusion of the historical presence of Latinos in the Midwest reflects “a more accurate vision of an American experience.” In education, the Chicano experience has also been more of an afterthought; when Chicano scholars include the Midwest, they provide only a cursory treatment

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94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.
of Midwestern Chicano educational experiences. Unpacking a national Mexican American and Chicano educational experience requires the inclusion of experiences outside traditionally studied areas, and I call for scholars to begin looking at these experiences in the Midwest and other non-Southwestern geographical locations.

Understanding Midwestern Chicano students’ identity and activism in higher education permits a deeper comprehension of the rich experiences of Chicanos beyond the research that is limited to one location. There are a handful of studies in which Chicano Studies scholars call for scholarship beyond the Southwest, a location attributed as the place from which everything regarding the Chicano experience emerges. In “The Aztec Palimpsest: Toward a New Understanding of Aztlán, Cultural Identity and History,” Daniel Cooper Alarcón’s critiques Aztlán as a symbol of Chicano identity because of its exclusion of geographical spaces, pointing out that “[o]ther important issues related to Chicano cultural identity that has been neglected include the disturbing tendency to focus on the Southwest in discussions about Chicanos, minimizing the attention paid to Chicanos who live in other geographic regions.” 96 In “Moving Beyond Atzlán,” Fernandez examines the inter-ethnic coalition-building between Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, and she challenges the Chicano Studies field to rethink its narrow view of Chicanos based on her findings about inter-relationships between Chicanos and other groups. 97 She argues that “we need to move beyond the usual and well-worn sites of inquiry to explore Mexican Americans in places like Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ohio, to name a few.” 98 This dissertation aims to answer her call and include understudied areas such as Wisconsin, Iowa, and


98. Ibid., 76.
Minnesota as well as places outside Chicago in Illinois to paint a richer picture of the Chicano experience. Fernandez also beckons Chicano Studies scholars by arguing that

the Midwest continues to be overlooked, understudied, and simply unexamined by many scholars. Whether intentional or not, the neglect of the region is no longer acceptable for a field that seeks to capture the rich historical experiences of Mexican Americans throughout the United States.99

I argue that her commentary should be extended to the history of American education. If the aim of the discipline is to fully understand rich historical educational experiences, then it is no longer acceptable to have such a limited grasp of the experiences of Mexican American, Chicano, and/or any Latino groups or to limit their experiences to the geographical location of the Southwest.

**Methodology/Approach**

This archival and historically researched dissertation is informed by the process of systematically examining an account of what happened in the past. Gilbert Garraghan further theorizes the term “history” as three major concepts: past actuality, the record of past events, and the process of making a record. “Past actuality” is a range of human events that occurred in the past (objective history).100 With the records of past events, historians attempt to give meaning (subjective history) to an objective history through artifacts (oral histories, letters, diary, etc.). How historians understand history as past actuality is “conditioned by our knowledge of the world in which we live” and viewed from multiple vantage points discovered from the record of past events.101 The dynamic account of past events involves an interpretative attempt by the

99. Ibid., 63.


101. Ibid., 5.
historian to recapture the nuances, personalities, and ideas associated with those events. In this dissertation I am making a record of how Chicano student identity and activism occurred in the Midwest. Historical research aims to reveal the general and the particular in historical phenomena and gain an understanding of various historical states. According to Garraghan, there are three tools that encompass historical methodology: the search of materials, criticism of sources, and writing of findings in terms of “objective truth and significance.” For historians, archival research is often the method at the core of the discipline.

This dissertation utilizes archival research, and primary and secondary sources to analyze the experiences of Midwestern Chicano student activism. Archival research allows glimpses “behind the scene” which permits triangulation and provides access to marginalized voices. Archives are a useful tool with which historians “can see the workings that led to particular policies or practices emerging.” To analyze my primary documents, I answered the following questions from Robert Jones Shafer in *A Guide to Historical Method*: (1) When was the source written or produced?; (2) Where was it produced?; (3) By whom was it produced?; (4) For whom was it produced?; (5) From what preexisting material was it produced (analysis)?; (6) What was the original form in which it was produced (integrity)? (7) What is the value of the source’s contents (credibility)? I also used the same methods to analyze newspaper articles, press releases, and correspondence between students and administrators and I heavily utilized student-

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102. Ibid., 34.


104. Ibid., 252.

created newsletters to examine the identity of Chicano students and their activism on the four campuses of this study.

Because this dissertation leans on the universities’ archives, much of the student experiences I piece together are from student-created university newsletters. UM Chicano students created a newsletter called *InAmatllXicanome* to “give the Chicano a chance to express themselves in a form of artistic writing or commentary writing to give them the recognition they deserve.”\(^{106}\) Graduate and undergraduate Chicano students established the newsletter in November 1975 to “foster pride in the Chicano community by developing educational and cultural community service projects and activities that were conducive to the benefit of La Raza.”\(^{107}\) The newsletter also provided a space that described Chicano activities on campus as well as issues that were happening to Chicanos in the Twin Cities and nationally.\(^{108}\) The UW had only a couple editions of its newsletter, *Onda*, which also had commentary and information about what was occurring on campus. However, the only issues I could find were from the early 1980s, which I utilize to understand the status of Chicanos at this institution as they entered that decade.

Both the UI and U of I published newsletters associated with their cultural centers that described what was occurring with those centers. For the UI, the Chicano students produced a newsletter and a literary magazine that were used as a recruiting tool and a way to share what was happening within the cultural center, the greater UI community, and across institutions in the Midwest. The newsletter was *El Laberinto*, and it allowed students to could find out what was

\(^{106}\) *InAmatllXicanome*, (November 1975). no box, no folder, # MKCfC432i, La Raza Student Cultural Organization Records, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota.

\(^{107}\) Ibid.

\(^{108}\) Ibid.
happening regarding classes, student organization meetings, and job opportunities across the university. It also provided space where they could discuss personal and political issues such as boycotts, tensions within the group, and what was occurring politically outside the Midwest. The UI also published *Nahuatzen: A Chicano Literary Magazine* that included interviews, political cartoons, essays, as well as poetry and stories written by the students.\(^\text{109}\)

At the U of I, Latino students published *La Carta Colectiva*, which was the La Casa Latina Cultural Center “house” newsletter.\(^\text{110}\) It was similar to UI’s *El Laberinto* and focused on giving students information about what was happening at the cultural center as well as what the house was promoting across campus. Although the newsletter asked for and featured essays, poems, or stories from Latino student members, it was mainly informative about cultural house activities.\(^\text{111}\) This newsletter also provided a space where students could express their views on personal and political issues occurring in Illinois and across the nation.

**Analysis Procedures**

I went to the university archives at the UM, UW, and U of I, and to the university archives and women’s archives at the UI and collected over one thousand documents, including newspaper clippings, memos from Chicano students and university administrators and/or between university administrators, student-created newsletters, conference proceedings, correspondence between students, transcripts of conference sessions, and flyers of events, and protests around the campus (implying that the flyers were for events and that there was other

\(^{109}\) *Nahuatzen*, Box 1, Newsletter Series, *Nahuatzen* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.

\(^{110}\) *La Carta Colectiva*, Programs & Activities folder, coll. 41/64/40, La Casa Cultural Latina Records, UIUC Library University Archives, University of Illinois.

\(^{111}\) *El Laberinto*, Box 1, Newsletter Series, *El Laberinto* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
evidence of protests). To effectively analyze such a sizeable quantity of documents, I devised the following analytical process.

I organized all the documents by institution, then by type and by chronological order within each type. For example, “newspaper clippings” were a type of document, and I organized the documents chronologically within that type. I then put each institution’s documents in its own separate binder; for example, the UW had its own binder, and the UI had its own binder and so on. The UM’s, UW’s, and UI’s documents each fit into one two-inch binder per university, and the U of I’s fit into three two-inch binders. In addition to the binders, I also created a digital catalogue of the documents by putting them in computer folders by document type and then organizing them chronologically for each school. However, I coded my documents through the binders first and then reordered the digital collection to coincide with the coding I did by hand. I created categories based on my dissertation questions and assigned them different colors. I used the following colors by highlighter with each document type in each institution’s binder: 
Identity-Chicano-National (yellow); Identity-Midwest (pink); Student Agency (blue); Student Demands (orange); Administration Response (Green).

For Identity-Chicano-National, I highlighted phrases and/or quotations that showcased Chicano students at each institution’s alignment with the national Chicano identity by identifying words such as “Atzlán” or “Viva la Raza.” For Identity-Midwest, I highlighted phrases and/or quotations that showcased Chicano students’ experiences at their institutions and/or their connections to their state and local communities. For example, I highlighted instances where Chicano students and/or newspapers referred to the Chicano demographics in their respective states. For Student Agency, I highlighted everything that described Chicano students’ efforts to

112 Any time I made new categories, I saved the prior ones to ensure I could always refer to the categories I made previously before comparing all four institutions’ themes if I missed a step.
create programs, recruit Chicano students, and establish Chicano cultural centers. For Student Demands, I focused on highlighting the major demands expressed in letters written by students, in student-created newsletters, and in newspaper articles. Lastly, for Administration Response, I highlighted any reactions to the demands made by Chicano students, as well as reactions by administrators through correspondence between Chicano students and administrators as well as administrators to other staff members and/or higher-level positions within the university.

When I completed the highlighting, I created multiple spreadsheets where I developed themes from my categories. I organized the spreadsheet by institution and created the following tabs: Institution, Document Type, Year, Category, Theme, Quote (if applicable). I then printed out the spreadsheets to compare the four institutions. From these printouts, I matched common themes across the four institutions to build a more comprehensive chronology of events. The documents revealed the themes and arguments from which I have built my dissertation chapters.

**Theoretical Inspiration: Borderland Theory and the Translocal in Critical Regionalism**

This dissertation is a historical piece, but to discuss migration history and geography, which is important to this dissertation, two theoretical frameworks assist in offering a conceptual explanation of how Chicano students formed their identity on Midwestern campuses: The Borderland theory and the concept of translocality. The Borderland theory is often attributed to Gloria Anzaldúa’s seminal work, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and she categorizes Chicanos living on the United States–Mexico border into “belonging” and “not-belonging” due to Chicanos not fully being welcomed into the United States and not being fully Mexican, either. In “Reclaiming the Borderlands: Chicana/o Identity, Difference, and Critical Pedagogy,” Alejandra Elenes illustrates the tension of both categories, stating,
These boundaries are the interstices between the so-called First and Third worlds, Anglo-American and the symbolic spaces that confine people of color in the metropolis, and formal and informal economy (legal and illegal). Anzaldúa focused on a dual identity, through the Mestiza (mixed race identity) of the indigenous and European backgrounds that recognizes past and present oppression.113

Anzaldúa uses the border to construct a mestiza identity at the “interstices of Mexican/Chicano culture, patriarchy, homophobia, and Anglo-American domination.”114 Those who reside on the United States–Mexican border are people whose identities are in “constant flux” within both the U.S. and Mexican cultures.115 Anzaldúa definition of the Mestiza identity blends elements from indigenous and European peoples to form a “new hybrid race” of both Indian and European descent.”116 The Borderland theory attempts to provide a “theatrical space, a discursive ‘home’, for an identity recognized as multiple fluid, and contradictory.”117 Using the Borderland theory and the concept of hybridity, Atzlán is shifted from homeland to borderland. Thus, Atzlán is no longer tied to the actual Southwestern land but has come to mean “the spiritual union of the Chicanos, something that is carried within the heart, no matter where they live or where they may find themselves.”118 While the hybrid identity Anzaldúa articulated through the concept of the mestiza refers to the duality of being both a part of Mexico and the United States, I apply the concept of hybrid identity for Chicanos to understand and refer to their being part of both the

114. Ibid., 365.
115. Ibid., 359.
Southwest. The students in this study claim the same heritage of Atzlán, but also the Midwest, a geographical space that was not visibly connected to Mexico. As such, they demonstrated a hybrid of being Mexican American and Midwestern. This dissertation explores how self-identified Chicano students understood their own identity and how that influenced the spaces they created for themselves on predominately white Midwestern campuses during the 1970s, and the hybridity of the Borderland theory helps explain their connection to Atzlán. While Atzlán is not in physical proximity to the heartland, Chicano students can still feel part of that mythical land because the hybrid identity allows them to go in between identities. For the purpose of this dissertation, space is socially constructed; it is fluid and is not bound to one place.119

Another theoretical framework that helps understand geographical mobility between the Midwest and Southwest is the concept of translocality within the study of Critical Regionalism. In Douglas Powell’s study Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape, regionalism is different from other types of places in that a “region must refer not to a specific site but to a larger network of sites: region is always a relational term (even when it appears not to be).”120 Powell notes that regional definitions are used “to isolate, to idolize, or to stigmatize a network of places . . . . [T]hese demarcations are always in relation to broader patterns of history, politics, and culture.”121 Thus, Critical Regionalism is about being aware that “writing about a region creates and sustains a definition of that region and, in doing, deliberately defines the region to create new, potentially revelatory perspective on it.”122


121. Ibid., 15.

122. Ibid.
Therefore, Critical Regionalism must be “ultimately, a pedagogy, one that teaches students how to draw their own regional maps connecting their experience to that of others near and far, both like and unlike themselves.” Within this study, Chicano students create their own regional maps by connecting their experiences in the Midwest and Southwest through their translocality, and by doing so, they find more connection than disconnection between the two locations.

The concept of translocality is credited to Arjun Appadurai, and it describes the ways “emplaced communities become extended, via the geographical mobility of their inhabitants, across particular sending and destination contexts.” Translocality is an important source of “meaning and identity for mobile subjects; at the level of human experience, the distinctiveness of place is retained rather than eroded by global migration flows.” In other words, the movement between two areas does not destroy identity and culture but in fact maintains it from one space to another. In terms of maintaining culture between the Mexican migration movements from Southwest to the Midwest, a few scholars of Chicano history utilize the translocal in their works. In The Tejano Diaspora: Mexican Americanism of Ethnic Politics in Texas and Wisconsin, Marc Simon Rodriquez studies how the migration network between Texas and Wisconsin influenced the political activism between the two areas in the 1960s, observing that Chicano activists’ political movements that began in Crystal City, Texas were maintained in Wisconsin as a “translocal” phenomenon. He expounds that “activists from Crystal City living

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123. Ibid., 17.

124. Appadurai, Modernity at Large, 168.


and working in Texas and Wisconsin spoke as Mexican-ancestry Americans with pride in their origins when they demanded acceptance of their status as persons and citizens of both places.”¹²⁷

In “Al Norte Toward Home,” Jose E. Limon describes his family’s experience migrating between Texas to the Midwest to work as a “translocal,” and he focuses his study on the cultural transmission between the two areas.¹²⁸ In this dissertation, the concept of the translocal is applied to how identity was transmitted between Midwestern and Southwestern Chicano students and how that influenced the spaces they constructed on their campuses through what Limon describes as a “construction of region to interconnect more fully, rather than disconnect local places to broader patterns of politics history and culture.”¹²⁹ Because of their diverse backgrounds with both geographical spaces, Chicano students at these four universities were interconnected in their Chicano ideology, which mutually benefited Chicanos in the Midwest and Southwest. To be clear, because this dissertation is a historical piece, I am utilizing the Borderland and translocality as a window to understanding the Midwestern Chicano students’ identity rather than a complete analysis using these theories.

Use of Terms

In this dissertation, the term “Chicano” describes students who enact the political ideology of reclaiming their Mexican cultural roots; they are technically Mexican Americans but have the Chicano political consciousness. “Mexican American” refers to individuals who have Mexican descent. I do not use “Chicano” and “Mexican American” interchangeably. Chicanos have a specific consciousness that rejects Mexican American assimilation to U.S. society. I use

¹²⁷. Ibid., 11.


¹²⁹. Ibid., 52.
“Mexican” to describe individuals from Mexico. Mexicans are a mixture of European stemming from their Spanish heritage and indigenous stemming from groups such as the Aztecs, as a result from the Spanish conquest. However, for the purpose of the dissertation when I discuss Chicanos reclaiming their Mexican heritage, they are specifically recapturing the indigenous aspects of their Mexican heritage, not their Spanish background.

I use the term “Anglo American” to refer to those of European descent such as Anglo-Saxon, German, Irish, etc. I do not use the term “white” because the historical literature I reviewed uses the term “Anglo” or “Anglo American.” Additionally, Mexican Americans are designated white by the U.S. census, and I want to avoid confusion from any reader questioning whether “white” also refers to Mexican Americans. I use “Mexican–American” with an en dash to refer to the political Mexican–American identity that promoted Mexican American assimilation into the dominant culture and separation from Mexican heritage. “Latino” encompasses Mexican Americans but also individuals with origins in Latin American countries, including Brazil but not Spain. “Hispanic” is also used in this dissertation as the U.S government-ascribed identity to define individuals from Latin American countries, including Spain but not Brazil.

At the UI, UW, and UM, the primary term that Mexican American students used to identify themselves was “Chicano.” The term “Chicano” is found in almost all the documentation with little variance; however, at the U of I, “Chicano” was not commonly found in the documentation. In newspaper clippings, administrative correspondence to students, and

how students wrote about their experiences in their student newsletters, they used the term “Latino” and/or “Latin.” “Latin” is short for “Latin American,” which was often used to describe Latinos at the time and still often used. When I discuss the U of I, I use the term Latino or Latin because that is how they referred to themselves, so calling them “Chicano” would be inaccurate in terms of how they viewed themselves. As I will discuss in this dissertation, Chicanos built coalitions with other-Latino ethnicities such as Puerto Ricans, which is why some student groups chose to use Latino as an identifier.

I rely on the definition of “identity” as understanding “who we are, who other people are and…other people’s understanding of themselves and of others.” To define “agency”, I use Daniel Solórzano’s and Dolores Delgado Bernal’s definition of “the confidence and skills to act on one’s behalf.” In the context of my study, I use “agency” to define Chicano university students acting on their own behalf to create lists of demands such as asking for Chicano Studies departments, cultural centers, and more. I use the term “space” to refer to physical and nonphysical locations. I refer to the creation of spaces as either a physical cultural center or meeting place or a nonphysical space in Chicano identity.

**Chapters Outline**

The chapters of this dissertation are in chronological order to follow the Chicano students from when they entered their institutions and contextualize why they still wanted to assert their Mexican heritage so far from the United States–Mexico border. I also showcase how their identity was something they wanted to maintain for future generations, which gave them extra

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motivation to persist through challenges to increase Chicano university recruitment and establish Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers. I support my central argument of how the Chicano hybrid identity of these four universities influenced their activism by illustrating the reasons why Midwestern Chicano students organized, made demands, and wanted to be visible were similar to those of the Chicano students in the Southwest their approach, however, was different. I demonstrate this in the following ways: chapter one establishes their hybrid identity with both Southwestern and Midwestern influences; chapter two focuses on how their hybrid identity impacted how they organized and made demands; chapter three explores their hybrid identity through Chicano educational conferences in that they wanted to link their Chicano identity with the same identity Southwestern Chicanos were reclaiming, but they were also trying to make sense of their presence in the Midwest; and chapter four demonstrates their persistence at maintaining their identity and the urgency with which they sought to increase Chicano students, faculty, and staff and build Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers for future generations of Chicanos.

In chapter one, I begin by examining the background of the Chicano students who entered these institutions by the late 1960s. I argue that Chicano students developed a hybrid identity due to their background of being translocal, as many of them came from or had parents from the Southwest and maintained a network between the two areas. I then demonstrate that they linked themselves to the Chicano identity and rejected assimilation into U.S. society. These students began to critique their educational institutions because they did not see their identity reflected in their campuses. Lastly, due to the small population of Chicanos on campus and in the community due to their location in the Midwest, these students felt alienated.
In chapter two, I showcase that hybrid identity in action. I argue Midwest Chicano students utilized their hybrid identity as they organized to demand greater inclusion on campus just like their Southwest counterparts did at their institutions, but the small Midwest Chicano population dictated that they include other Latino ethnicities like Puerto Ricans and non-Latino marginalized groups. Since they could not argue that the Midwest was originally Mexico as a basis to advocate for their demands nor were they native to the land in the Midwest, Midwest Chicano students had to focus on the contributions Chicanos made to building the Midwest through railroads, factory work, and in the fields as their primary claims.

In chapter three, I examine how Chicanos in the Midwest made themselves visible to their university communities and administration by creating “awareness” conferences to make their campuses recognize their existence and cultural differences. Here, they demonstrated their hybrid identity and they affirmed their Chicano identity by retaining cultural heritage and linking with Atzlán, but they also sought to examine their Midwestern historical presence and experiences.

Chapter four shifts to the second question of this study and examines Chicano students’ activism on campus to increase Chicano recruitment and establish Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers. I argue that Chicano identity influenced their persistence because they wanted to maintain their cultural heritage for future generations. Thus, this was a motivating factor for these students to persist through any university administrations’ resistant in order to create change on their campuses. The conclusion reviews the arguments made in this dissertation and discusses the contributions the Chicano students’ activism on these four campuses made to future generations of Chicano and Latino students.
CHAPTER 1: OUR LAND, ATZLÁN, IS STILL HERE . . .

In “Al Norte Toward Home,” Jose Limon asserts that Chicano students from Texas who enrolled in Midwestern universities contributed to the founding of Chicano Studies departments, including the UW and UM. However, he notes the benefits of the exchange between the two areas:

That is, while Tejanos brought their cultural and political recourses into social struggle in the Midwest, it is also clear that their experience in the Midwest, with its greater latitude of political and social opportunity but also the sheer experience of distancing from Texas, proved to be invaluable resources that those who returned to Texas then brought to bear upon the social struggle in the state.\(^{133}\)

Chicano youth who migrated with their parents from the Southwest to the Midwest to work in the fields, factories, and railroads were translocal, and Chicanos had opportunities in the Midwest that were not available in the Southwest. For example, this migration cycle between the two areas also benefited Chicano students in higher education; as Limon observes, “We might also wish to note that the manner in which Midwestern universities . . . trained a cadre of Texas based scholars, educators, attorneys, and social workers, who then returned to Texas to participate in struggle andsocial change . . . .”\(^{134}\)

This chapter explores the first part of Limon’s call by arguing that the labor migration link between the Midwest and Southwest applied to higher education and is a reason why Chicanos at the four institutions developed a hybrid identity as both geographical spaces influenced how they understood themselves. I argue that the translocal experience is a contributor to Chicano students’ hybrid identity because some of the students were born in the Southwest and migrated to the Midwest, while others were native born in the Midwest but had


\(^{134}\) Limon, “Al Norte Toward Home”, 52.
Southwestern parents. Because of this, Chicano students saw and/or understood the labor exploitation that Mexican Americans endured. Due to this experience, they wanted to assert their Mexican heritage that was linked to Atzlan—the geographic land in the Southwest that was previously Mexico—in the geographically distant Midwest. However, for some Chicano students from the Southwest, coming to the Midwest helped them develop a Chicano identity because they had no physical reminders of their Mexican heritage in a predominately white town.

University of Iowa student Nancy “Rusty” Barceló is an example of this.

When she arrived at the UI as a graduate student, Nancy “Rusty” Barceló recalls, “going to Iowa (believe it or not) was probably the best thing that ever happened to me, especially affirming my identity as Chicana.” Although she was from California, Barceló did not come to Iowa with a “Chicana conscience”—or an understanding of her Mexican cultural distinctions compared to the general community—but she discovered one through her experiences in a small Midwest college town, where she was no longer surrounded by her cultural artifacts. She explains:

At that part of my life I had not yet realized that being a Chicana Mexican American was important—I just took it for granted that I was one. In California I took being Chicana for granted because family, culture, and language surrounded me—from the names of cities like this one, Sacramento, to Vallejo, San Francisco and San Jose, to the Mexican store right around the corner from my grandmother’s house. In Iowa I did not have those kinds of cultural landmarks to remind and affirm me. I learned for the first time that this comes from within.

Barceló’s recollection showcases how Iowa contributed to her identity development in a way that was not available in California. She also reveals the regional Midwestern influence on her


because when she came to Iowa City, she encountered a place with very few people who reflected her experience. Barceló’s reflections represent one type of the background types of the Chicano students who entered the UI, U of I, UM, and UW had. Other background types included Chicano student activists who “were of Mexican heritage, Minnesota-born, whose migrant parents were from Texas [or] New Mexico . . .” as illustrated by the following UM students’ backgrounds: Ramona Arreguin de Rosales of Minneapolis; Nick Castillo, Jr. of St. Paul; Ray Roybal, originally from New Mexico; and Adam Chavarria, originally from Texas. 137 Yet other students who came to Minnesota were also from the Southwest and/or living in both areas while working in both areas. A 1977 Committee also noted the diverse backgrounds of the Chicano population in Minneapolis in its report, they wrote, “The Mexican-origin population of Minnesota is thus a heterogeneous population composed of U.S. citizens and resident aliens, of long-time residents and recent arrivals, of native-born Minnesotans and transplanted Chicanos from both the Southwest and Midwest.” 138 This quote acknowledges the translocal experience of geographical influences of both the Southwest and Midwest.

The link between both geographical areas also permeated into the education realm as the Chicanos entering these institutions sought to preserve their distinctive cultures and rejected assimilation of their Mexican heritage to an Anglo American background, which they believed the educational intuitions promoted. They began to critique these institutions for being unaware and not serving their academic and social integration onto campuses. Since few Chicano students were enrolled at these intuitions and the Chicano populations in the general community


were small, Chicano students felt alienated from their campuses. Through their experiences with two geographical areas and the labor network, the Chicano students were able to develop a hybrid identity that they would later use to critique their educational institutions and the alienation they felt once they arrived there. The purpose of this chapter is to build the context of how they developed their hybrid identity to support the arguments I make in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation.

1.1. Chicanos Enter the UI, UM, UW, and U of I

In the history of education, higher-education institutions were designed for certain groups of people that often did not include students of color. The two most commonly used books in history of education courses, Fredrick Rudolph’s *The American College and University: A History* and John Thelin’s *A History of Higher Education*, reflect the focus of most histories of higher education, which educational historian Christopher Tudico describes as “Ivy League schools and the White men that established these institutions.” Higher educational admissions policies have long been discriminatory. For example, Jerome Karabel’s *The Chosen* describes the denial of entrance to higher-educational institutions, including the prestigious Harvard University’s denial of qualified Jewish applicants in the 1920s under standards the institution described as considering the “quality” of the whole man, which the selection committees felt


Jews did not embody.\textsuperscript{142} Therefore, admissions standards have clearly reflected the social control of upper-level administrations rather than the qualifications of the student. Students of color have long been considered unacceptable in higher education, as shown in the well-documented history of African American education.\textsuperscript{143} The public institutions on which this study focuses were all created during the land-grant era in the late 1850s to 1880s, and their founding documents all reflect a mission to support social equality. For example, at the UW, “[t]he Wisconsin idea” was developed to “extend educational and applied research efforts beyond the borders of its campus.”\textsuperscript{144} The Wisconsin idea was attributed to UW president Charles Van Hise, through a 1905 addressed, avowed that “I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the University researches every family of the state.”\textsuperscript{145} Still, each of the four universities’ educational histories do not make visible the arrival of Chicanos students to their campuses.\textsuperscript{146}

Although none of the schools used in this study had any documentation pinpointing the first Chicano students who enrolled in them, there were Mexicans who came to these universities such as the U of I, as international students. U of I had documented Mexican students enrolled as

\textsuperscript{142} Karabel, \textit{The Chosen}.


early as 1884. Additionally, most of these institutions either omitted Chicano student history from their time lines or described Latino and Chicano students who entered the institutions as an aside to the African American experience there. Also, the UI depicts a positive experience for students of color, emphasizing that it was the first institution to “admit women and men, regardless of race.” Yet, while UI boasts the early enrollment of African American students as early as the 1870s, African Americans were not allowed to live in the dormitories. Only the U of I described its past as a historically white institution. The U of I was founded in 1867; it noted in its initial charter in 1863 that it only provided for the education of white students, but “the language was removed before the actual opening of the university due to the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments, but the legacy of an all-white education was very strong as the first African American would not graduate from Illinois until the turn of the century.” Yet the history of African American student entrances to these institutions reveals that Chicanos entered through Equal Opportunity Programs (EOPs) that were established in the late 1960s.

The African American Civil Rights Movement, alongside Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society programs, improved the representation of minoritized populations—including the Chicanos. The Great Society Program’s initiatives were an attempt to “redress historical inequities and systemic discrimination within American society.” They included legislation


150. Solis, “To preserve our heritage”, 10.


152. MacDonald, Botti, and Clark, “From Visibility to Autonomy,” 479.
such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Act, and the 1965 Higher Education Act. The goal of these laws was to help expand political, social, economic, and educational opportunities for vulnerable populations.\textsuperscript{153} The 1965 Higher Education Act helped promote programs that focused on the recruitment and access of students of color through EOPs. The EOPs often prioritized African American students but provided a gateway to higher education through which Chicanos also entered.\textsuperscript{154}

After the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, there was a greater urgency to alleviate racial inequity, and EOPs formed across the United States in the late 1960s, taking on different names such as “special support services.”\textsuperscript{155} Joy Williamson’s \textit{Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965–75} documents African American activism on the U of I campus. African American students protested for greater representation due to the isolation and negative campus climate they had endured. They organized a unified group named the Black Students Association to deal with the concerns of African American students.\textsuperscript{156} In May 1968, the U of I announced the creation of the Special Education Opportunities Program (SEOP) to recruit more students of color, with a focus on African American student recruitment. The U of I also developed a program called Project 500, which focused on recruiting five hundred students of color for the 1968-1969 academic year.

Although primarily focused on recruiting African American students, Project 500 served as an entryway for Chicanos to enter the U of I: “in 1968, 565 African Americans and Latinos

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 480.
\item\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{155} Williamson, \textit{Black Power on Campus}, 57; MacDonald, Botti, and Clark, “From Visibility to Autonomy,” 480.
\item\textsuperscript{156} Williamson, \textit{Black Power on Campus}, 47, 57.
\end{itemize}
entered the university.”  

By 1969, the student of color population grew to the point that they had to diversify services, which resulted in the EOP becoming the Department of Special Support Services in July 1970. The Department of Special Support Services served students of color in the areas of academics, financial aid, and social services. As early as 1968, the UM attempted to recruit Mexican American students also as a project through the EOP, but by 1969, there still were few Mexican Americans—including those who identified as Chicano—on campus.

1.2. Hybrid Identity: Chicano Consciousness in These Midwestern Institutions

Chicano students who organized during this era were not unique among other marginalized groups; as UI student Tony Zavala recalls,

The gays were getting organized, the blacks, the women, what society calls fringe groups—before, we were all fringe. Now we’re part of the society, but before we were outsiders. So, we were not unique in that respect. Everybody was trying to organize . . .

The Civil Rights and the Anti-Vietnam War movements also influenced Chicano students because they “inspired a significant number of Mexican-Americans to reexamine their own condition through history and conclude that they too had been the victims of U.S. imperialism.”

Chicanos began to relate more with African Americans and Vietnamese, instead


158. “Special Support Services,” The University of Iowa, Box 3, Correspondence folder, Coll. IWA0188. Nancy “Rusty” Barceló Papers, Iowa Women’s Archives, The University of Iowa.


160. Tony Zavala, quoted in Solis, “‘To Preserve Our Heritage and Our Identity,’” 86.

161. Garcia, Chicanismo, 129.
of attempting to fit into Anglo American society. As the Civil Rights Movement called for Black pride and Black Power, Chicanos also called for Chicano power and pride, through which the use of “Chicano” as a label came to be seen as a “renewed pride in the Indian and mestizo poor who had built so much of the Southwest during the Spanish and Anglo colonizations.”

Chicano students in the Midwest were also discovering this same pride in the Chicano identity; as UM graduate student Alfredo Gonzalez writes,

> Many Americans of Mexican background had held an ambiguous American Indian background. For the most part, Mexican Americans accepted being mestizos, or mixed-blood people, but they tended to glorify their European or Spanish inheritance and to downplay or disown their Amerindian inheritance, which is Native American. A resurgence in pride for Amerindian past was exhilarating. The acceptance and assertion of our Amerindian heritage was another first. Being designated Brown was a standard we wore with pride and assertiveness.

Like the other marginalized students who organized for their rights, Chicano students embraced their indigenous heritage and proclaimed pride in “Brown Power” similar to the ideology found in Black power.

Chicanos who were students at these four institutions connected with the Chicano identity of reclaiming their indigenous Mexican heritage that the Denver Conference in 1969 promoted. This was because the conference was a higher-education network formed between the Southwest and Midwest. This conference remained a key motivator and connection for students in the following ways 1) created the momentum for Chicano students in the Midwest to form student organizations 2) proved a space where Chicanos in both the Southwest and Midwest could united in their Chicano identity and 3) transmitted ideas and concepts between the two areas. For

162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
example, the students at these four schools in the Midwest attended Chicano Youth Liberation Conference in Denver in 1969, where *El Plan Espiritual* was presented—the plan from which the Chicano ideology emerged.\(^{165}\) The *Daily Minnesota*, the university newspaper, reported that Chicano students organized a student organization—Latin Liberation Front (LLF)—in 1969 and were going to this conference.\(^{166}\) Many of the UM Chicano students were born in Minnesota to parents who migrated there largely from the Southwest.\(^{167}\) Additionally, the Denver conference continued the momentum of transferring ideas via student-created newsletters. Chicano students in the Midwest, through the newsletters, were kept abreast of what was occurring not only locally but also in the Southwest. Chicano students created newsletters such as *El Laberinto* and *InAmatlInXicanome* and used them as a source to educate other Chicano students regarding their history and identity. Their newsletters consisted of reprinted new articles from Southwestern states that ranged from topics on Chicano politics to police brutality to the United Farm Workers Union struggle. Besides the articles from newspapers in California, Texas, and Colorado, the students also exchanged newsletters between universities in the Midwest and Southwest which was documented when the editors of *InAmatlInXicanome* reported that a Chicano from the University of California, Berkeley introduced them to their Berkeley newsletter, *El Fuego de Atzlán*.\(^{168}\) This link was promoted when their editors announced that they were going to exchange copies of future issues of their newsletters and noted that the editors of *El Fuego*  

\(^{165}\) Ibid.  


\(^{167}\) Gonzalez, “The Beginnings.”  

\(^{168}\) “El Fuego de Atzlán,” *InAmatlInXicanome* 2, no.2, (October 1976), no box, no folder, # MKCIC432i, La Raza Student Cultural Organization Records, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota. “Noticias” is Spanish for “news”.

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wanted poems, stories, and artwork from Chicanos at the UM. The following issues of the MN newsletters divided the news section with one side reporting local Minnesota issues and the other side titled “Noticias de Atzlán.” On the “Noticias de Atzlán” side, the editors reported the inequities that were occurring in the Southwest, including the exploitation of migrant workers, which they attributed to the effects of The Treaty. Hence, through these newsletters Chicano students at these four institutions saw that the labor exploitation and educational inequities in the Southwest also affected their own local Chicano community because of The Treaty.

The Treaty through the U.S. constitution articles VIII and IX stated that Mexicans who remained in the United States were guaranteed civil and property rights. However, Mexicans—now Mexican Americans—who remained lost land and political and economic power due to the immigration of Anglo Americans. In California, the American Court of Land Claims was formed in 1851 to adjudicate land-grant claims, and Anglo Americans began to illegally reside on Mexican American property without any legal repercussions, forcing Mexican Americans to leave. Additionally, when Anglo American settlers discovered gold, they began to immigrate rapidly to California; as Gutiérrez notes, “in early 1848, nearly 100,000 [Anglo American] immigrants poured into California over the next two years, reducing the Spanish-speaking population to a tiny ethnic minority virtually overnight,” and Mexican Americans began to lose their political control over the area because Anglo American settlers brought their

169. Ibid.
171. Ibid., 68.
own political systems. Mexican Americans also lost economic power as they were relegated into non-skilled jobs.

After The Treaty, the United States and Mexico still had issues to resolve, such as the ownership of the Mesilla Valley and Isthmus of Tehantepec. The U.S. government wanted the area to build a transcontinental railroad. The Gadsden Purchase was an agreement in 1853 under which the United States paid Mexico ten million dollars for a 29,000-square-mile portion of Mexico that later became part of Arizona and New Mexico. This purchased provided the land necessary to create the Southern transcontinental railroad. As a result of this purchase, the United States was in position to be a “region of great potential wealth in minerals, grass lands, and fertile intermountain valleys.” The significance of the Gadsden Purchase is that it created what is currently the Southwestern border. It highlights how the United States created the borders that separated Mexicans from the United States both physically and culturally.

The consequence of The Treaty was the loss of land and economic power that left Mexicans in poverty. U.S. capitalists were successful at recruiting Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the Southwest to build the railroads and work on a seasonal basis in the Midwest. In 1879 to 1881, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad was built across New Mexico to join Topeka, Kansas with Santa Fe, Mexico. The Santa Fe would also expand lines from Kansas City to Chicago. Historian Dinicio Valdés noted that “[r]ailroads were the first major

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175. Ibid., 264.

employer in the Midwest to take advantage of international networks.”

By 1923, recruiting agencies in Texas and Mexico recruited close to 35,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans to work in nonagricultural positions in the Midwest and Pennsylvania. By 1927, more Mexican railroad communities began to appear in Iowa in cities such as Fort Madison, Davenport, and Council Bluffs, as well as cities in Illinois such as Moline, Silvis, and Rock Island. Mexican immigrants and their families encountered poor living conditions because they had to live near the railroads and/or in boxcars that their employers provided and managed. Mexican workers were also found working in steel mills and packinghouses, though they were “confined to the worst jobs” in those industries and subjected to significant exploitation.

Chicano students understood the influence of the labor exploitation on the Mexican and Mexican American workers—especially those students who came with their migrant families to the Midwest, as demonstrated in a poem by a Chicano student at the UI in their student-created newsletter, *El Laberinto*. The Chicano student wrote about the oppression this labor caused, which affirmed the student’s connection to Atzlán, proclaiming:

> We are la raza de Bronze!
> So many times, we have said,
> We are being oppressed,
> We are being exploited,
> and yet our people are still suffering the same,
> in the migrant camps, or in the factories,
> or at the unemployment lines.
> Our carnales are shipped back to Mexico,
> when they are here, to claim what rights belong to them.

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Our land Atzlán, is still here . . .  

The poem calls out the exploitation of Mexican labor and notes that oppression exists in the Midwest, as the author states, “we are being exploited and yet our people are still suffering the same.” This exploitation was the link between the laborers in the Southwest and Midwest. Mexicans and Mexican Americans also came to the Midwest to work in agricultural fields, harvesting sugar beets and vegetables. This labor aided in the growth of social networks in the Midwest between workers and “came to connect North Dakota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to Texas.” Migrants developed friendships and shared news between the two areas, establishing what Marc Simon Rodriguez calls a “web of cooperation and mutual dependence” that made labor organizing possible, and civic participation in each place impacted the other. The poor conditions Mexicans and Mexican Americans encountered in their lower-status positions—most notably in agriculture in the Midwest—were a common experience they shared with agricultural workers in the Southwest. The network between the Southwest and Midwest also impacted the Mexican and Mexican American youth who migrated with their parents to both locations. These young Mexican and Mexican Americans—young men, in particular—understood the exploitation and poor working conditions their parents endured in both areas, which motivated them to protest and advocate on their parents’ behalf.

181. “Relate, Carnal,” El Laberinto 1, no. 2 (November 1971), Box 1, Newsletter Series, El Laberinto Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.


184. Ibid.
According to Rodriguez, the labor exploitation of their parents was something that “their children knew well,” and it inspired the Chicano youth activism of Jose Angel Gutiérrez and Jesus Salas.  

These two young Mexican Americans began to speak in support of the causes of their parents and other farmworkers. They helped mobilize other young Mexican American men to participate in civic engagement by voting for Los Cinco, a 1963 election of five Mexican Americans voted into the predominately white Crystal Lake, Texas city council. As Rodriguez argues, “drawing on the complex networks of their migrant community, Mexican American youth connected strategies for civil rights activism between Crystal Lake, Texas, and such Wisconsin cities as Milwaukee and Madison, ultimately strengthen the civic role of the ethnic community in both locations.”

Gutiérrez’s and Salas’ activism began with the 1963 election of Los Cinco and their activism followed them throughout their careers, with Gutiérrez becoming the founder of La Raza Unida Party (RUP), and Salas becoming an early Chicano activist at the UW.

Jesus Salas was influenced by his childhood in Crystal Lake City, Texas coming from a generation of migrants and spending time in the fields before going to school. He moved to Wisconsin when he was a teenager but saw the events of the “Los Cinco” campaign in 1963 when he returned to visit his grandparents in Texas. This event inspired Salas to become an activist and he began to assist migrant workers in Wisconsin. He became a migrant representative on Wisconsin’s Committee on Migratory Labor and helped establish a bilingual paper, La Voz Mexicana, in 1964 in the state. In 1966, Salas organized a migrant-worker union at

185. Ibid., 76.
186. Ibid.
187. Ibid.
the Burns and Sons potato-processing plant in Almond, Wisconsin. He was able to form the union because of the migratory social networks, as well as relationships between progressive UW faculty and Chicano student activists.\textsuperscript{188} He was among the first Chicanos to enter the UW in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Another example of the type of student who was entering or returning to the Midwest was UM graduate student Alfredo Gonzalez. Although he does not describe his reasoning for coming to Minnesota, his written history reveals that he was born in Texas and attended the Denver conference with Minnesota-born undergraduate students Castillo and Chavarria. Alfredo Gonzalez left Minnesota briefly by taking a position at a university in New York in 1969, despite not having a doctoral degree, but he recalls the Minnesota-born Chicanos being committed to bringing him back there, describing how “a delegation of students, Nick Castillo, Jr., Gloria Gallegos, and Manual Guzman, all Minnesota-born Chicanos came to New York.”\textsuperscript{189} They urged him to return with declarations such as, “You are the first person of our people I’ve ever known or met who taught at the university,” or, “You are the first teacher of our Raza I have ever known…” Alfredo Gonzalez complied, recalling “these touching declarations ensured my return to Minnesota.”\textsuperscript{190} This example also highlights the lengths Chicano students would go to retain faculty members who reflected their shared Mexican heritage because their universities had such low Chicano representation.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{189} Gonzalez, “The Beginnings of Chicano Studies in Minnesota.”
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
1.3. Critiques of an Oppressive Educational Institution

Through networking between the two geographical areas, Chicano students critiqued the lack of Chicano representation in their institutions. The second major conference that helped establish the Chicano Youth Movement—the Santa Barbara conference—promoted Chicano identity and introduced the plan for Chicanos in higher education called *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. The creators of this plan criticized the Americanization of Chicanos by Anglo American schools—particularly their focus on individualism, which Alfredo Gonzalez refers to as a “psychological colonization of Mexican American youth.”191 Chicano students sought to remedy the limited presence of Chicanos in their educational institutions through the plan, which had three major demands: (1) Chicano student recruitment and retention; (2) the establishment of Chicano student programs; and (3) the means to increase Chicano students’ presence in community activism. It called for a rediscovery of pride in Mexican culture, history, and language through Chicano Studies curricula.192 Chicano newsletters at these four institutions referenced the tenets of *El Plan de Santa Barbara*. For example, at UI in the January 1973 edition of *El Laberinto*, editors dedicated a full page to the solution *El Plan de Santa Barbara* endorsed for higher education inequities based on race. According to the editors, the plan was recommended for all Chicano students and educators on campuses where there is a sizeable number of Raza trying to cope with the Anglo educational system. The Plan is a unique plan of education in that it is applicable to most campuses where Chicanos now study, exist, live: The Anglo University.193

191. Ibid.


193. “El Plan de Santa Barbara” 2, No. 3, (January 1973), Box 1, Newsletter Series, *El Laberinto* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007. Records of the Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
The editors’ description of the plan indicated that it also inspired students at UI because they felt that it was applicable to their experience in the Midwest since their campuses were predominately white. They used the plan as an educational tool to seek more representation on their campuses and have a curriculum that reflected their history and experiences.

The Mexican American losses of political, social, and economic power stemming from the legacy of the U.S. conquest of Mexico kept them as a source of lower-status labor for U.S. capitalists. From the early 1900s until the Chicano Movement, Anglo Americans perceptions of Mexican Americans as racially inferior influenced their educational experiences because Anglo American society and employers wanted to maintain Mexican Americans’ place in the lower echelons of society. For example, in both the Southwest and Midwest, the agricultural economy relied heavily on Mexican and Mexican American labor, but the educational experiences of rural Mexican and Mexican American students were negatively impacted. In the Midwest, Mexican and Mexican American schoolchildren also had to work in the fields to support their families; as a report from Minnesota states, “child labor has been the accepted practice in the beet fields of Minnesota in spite of our child labor and compulsory school laws.” Chicano students believed the U.S. K–12 systems had been complicit in creating the negative stereotypes about Chicanos by excluding their cultural history from the curricula. The Anglo American society’s stereotypes that Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans were socially and intellectually inferior combined with a dependence on them for labor resulted in


195. Ibid.

what became the foundation of the Mexican American educational experience: segregation in K–12 schooling.

In “Distorted Media Oppression,” Hector Gamboa—director of The University of Iowa Chicano student teatro (theatre)—opines that Midwestern Chicanos’ lack of knowledge of their cultural heritage was because they had “been raped of their Indo-Hispano heritage” by Anglo American controlled institutions.197 He points directly to the U.S. media and K–12 school system as the cause for Chicanos’ loss of culture in the Midwest, declaring:

This cultural genocide has been caused by the media and ‘educational’ institutions that are biased and narrow minded. The Chicano, sometimes called a Mexican-American, has always been depicted as a dirty, lazy, bandido, sleeping under a cactus; a greasy, ignorant, dumb, campesino: a rotten pachuco who always carries a switchblade or other negative image. The misrepresentation, and false image that media presents has caused many of our people to feel ashamed and inferior to Anglos.198

According to this passage, the implication is that the negative misrepresentations of Chicanos as being lazy, dumb or violent were stereotypes the K–12 schools utilized, which influenced the poor achievement of Chicano students. Also, Chicano students from a young age were left to feel embarrassed of their cultural heritage. Chicano university students in the Midwest shared this sentiment of shame about their cultural heritage, as the poem entitled “‘Mexican American Poem’” by UI student Tony Zavala showcases:

My inferiority complex reached a new low today.
A mere 20% of Inferiority.
Only once did I feel I was not “with it”
and only twice that I didn’t know “what was what” in life.
Only once that “white was right”

197. Hector Gamboa, “Distorted Media Oppression,” Nahuatzen, 2, no. 1, N.D., Box 1, Newsletter Series, Nahuatzen Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.

198. Ibid.
and not once, not once that MY Spanish was a handicap”199

This poem showcases the negative effects of assimilation and how the message that Anglo American culture was superior influenced Chicanos in higher education by imparting inferiority on their self-image. Additionally, Anglo Americans urged Chicanos to assimilate to their culture, but the Anglo American community also negatively stereotyped them, as UI student Tony Zavala observes:

[I]t is very hard to convince all gavachos (from the students to staff and workers) that the world of the barrio is not the shit hole they think it is. It is not that uniform or conformist or submissive as all the social researchers (reactionaries all) think it is.200

Zavala indicates the strong harmful stereotypes that the university community had regarding Chicanos, such as that they were poor, submissive, and homogenous. But Chicano students spurned this negative stereotyping and began to assert the positive attributes of their cultural heritage by proclaiming their Chicano identity.

Chicanos at these institutions rejected assimilation to proclaim their cultural and political identity. Chicano students at UW describe:

a rejection of assimilation. Today however, the Chicano University students, and the Chicano movement in general, mindful of the historic price of assimilation, view and seek change within the community as the point of departure for our social and political involvement. Thus, it is no accident the term Chicano, in the past a pejorative and class-bound adjective, has been taken, re-interpreted, and re-defined by the community as the heart of hearts of a new Mexican American cultural and political identity.201

199. Antonio Zavala, “‘Mexican American’ Poem,” El Laberinto 1, no. 2 (November 1971), Box 1, Newsletter Series, El Laberinto Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007. Records of the Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa

200. El Laberinto 2, no. 5 (June 1973), Box 1, Newsletter Series, El Laberinto Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007. Records of the Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. “Gavachos” is a derogatory term for Anglo Americans.

This passage shows how Chicano students retook the term “Chicano,” which previously had a negative stereotype, to reassert their power by reinterpreting it to mean something positive about their community. To showcase their seriousness about their identity, they then demanded that their university use their preferred identity, noting at the UW that “[t]he term Chicano, then, is self-denoting, affirmative and positive from the prospective of the Chicano people. Accordingly, as pledge of the University’s commitment to higher education for our people, a tangible first step will be the designation of our programs as Chicano, in their descriptive titles.”202 This example also demonstrates how Chicano students wanted to make clear to the university that they should be seen in a positive light in how they educated their institutions about their cultural heritage.

Additionally, Chicano students used poetry in their newsletters to reject assimilation. A poem from an anonymous UI student, entitled “Hey,” has a direct theme of refusing to assimilate:

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Hey
We don’t have to assimilate
We don’t have to ‘become’
We ARE
Long before Cortez we were Americans
This continent is our continent
Tu espíritu es tuyo [Your Spirit is yours]
No lo vendas [Don’t sell it]
That is what will carry
me and you through . . . .
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As noted in the poetry and comments above, the writer asserts that they do not have to change to fit the needs the United States and instead reclaims the area for themselves. This also showcases

202. Ibid.

203. “Hey!,” *El Laberinto* 1, no. 2 (November 1971), Box 1, Newsletter Series, *El Laberinto* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.

64
how they still felt connected to the land even in the Midwest and wanted to maintain their
cultural heritage. UI Chicano students also used the commentary section in their newsletter, *El Laberinto*, to reject the Anglo American stereotypes of Chicanos. As Zavala notes:

In the Midwest it is hard to be Chicano, but the benefits of being one are necessary for all of us to live . . . . The Chicano poets y writers are the people that can begin to cut the alienation and lethargy of life in the Midwest. Let’s open the door for them and fill our ears with palabaras de liberación [Words of Freedom] . . . . Little by little we are destroying our carnalism [blood] and our humanidad [Humanity] en la Midwest. Y without a doubt nos perdemos [We will lose ourselves] . . . . Don’t let it happen. Surface the mediocrity of the Midwest and its deception of tolerance and liberal acceptance. RAZA let the poets and writers (& painters) of the Midwest from Michigan to Wisconsin to Illinois to Iowa to Minnesota to Kansas start point the way for us to be Raza de Atzlán de palabaras de liberación [Words of action]. Sí Se Puede! [Yes, we can] 204

Here Zavala points out again that U.S. society and the educational system in the Midwest attempted to rid Chicanos of their cultural heritage. Yet he calls Chicano students across the Midwest to fight against this assimilation by reclaiming their identity. He also calls for Chicano students to change the structure of their institutions to make space for them:

The gavacho university is no place to find temporary refuge, on the contrary it’s a place to get the hell of in one piece. While there out of necessity one should change it, alter it, influence it, pressure it and tighten its neck until it sees the reality of the Chicano 205

Zavala’s views on influencing change in the university educational systems were shared by Chicanos across the other three universities. UW Chicano students write that

we perceive the university as an institutional instrument of change. Not only do we understand the strategic importance of the university, however, but we also perceive it as something that should belong to us, too. Therefore, just as it performs for Anglo-American society certain assigned tasks and functions, we justifiably reason that the university must respond to the needs and aspirations of our community 206

204. Antonio Zavala, “In Defense of the Chicano Poets and Writers,” *Nahuatzen* 3, no. 1, Box 1, Newsletter Series, *Nahuatzen* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. Spanish translation is my own.

205. *El Laberinto* 1, no. 5 (June 1973), Box 1, Newsletter Series, *El Laberinto* Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. Gavacho is a derogatory term in Spanish for Anglo American.

Chicano students believed in education as a source of change that could help remedy social inequities in society. Chicano students wanted to access this change and felt that their universities needed to allow Chicanos to be free to be themselves, as shown in UM student A. Estrella’s untitled poem:

Reason trying to bring order to a
Chaos that cries for
Its last break
Repressing the primal will to be free
The need to be free to think
Without shackles
Of a society gone mad
The desire to be ones own self
Without having to fit a mold
The freedom to cry out!
Raza!
Chicano!
Atzlán!

Estrella’s poem highlights the oppression Chicano students felt by not being to express their identity on their campus and their urge to break free from that oppression by not assimilating. Chicano students wanted the acceptance of their cultural heritage to feel a sense of belonging on campus.

Chicano students at these institutions felt isolated on their campuses, which were documented in their student newsletters through poetry and commentaries. One example is UI student’s poem titled “The Rule Here”:

Lost in the immensity of Anglo education,
In this great impersonal nightmare,
I cannot help but wonder
What the hell am I doing here

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207. A. Estrella, “Unitled,” InAmatInXicanome 1, no.2, (December 1975), no box, no folder, # MKCfC432i, La Raza Student Cultural Organization Records, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota.
Do not help your classmate
Because he might learn something you know
Then you will be one step behind
While he may be a step ahead
Do not mingle with so called “radical” people,
They might pollute your mind, and
you might wake up and realize
those people know more than you do.
People struggling, people fighting
Competing with walking libraries.
Yes, those computer minds know all about books
But nothing about other people

This poem labels Anglo values as those that promote competition in the lines, “Do not help your classmate because he might learn something you know” and, “then you will be one step behind,” whereas Chicano values are associated with collaboration and community. The author also critiques Anglo American controlled educational systems by declaring that Anglo American students have “computer minds [that] know all about books, but nothing about other people.” This symbolizes that Anglo American students know a lot of academic information but lack knowledge of other communities and cultures such as Chicano identity. The author feels like he does not belong in college when he states, “Lost in the immensity of Anglo education, in this great impersonal nightmare.” The poem expresses that the Chicano student does not see himself reflected in his educational experience.

1.4. Alienation on Campus

As Chicanos entered these four universities, some were leaving cities and/or urban areas and others were leaving their rural towns in which their Mexican and Mexican American families surrounded them. Thus, when they matriculated into universities with their cultural

208. Glora Pantoja, “The Rule Here,” Nahuatzen, 4, no. 1, Box 1, Newsletter Series, Nahuatzen Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
differences, borders were created between the Chicano students, the university communities, and the universities themselves, which became “border towns.”

In the article, “Border Towns and Cities in Comparative Perspective,” Paul Nugent defines a “border town” as “a place that is more or less dependent on the border for its existence . . . [I]t is not just a city located close to the border, but it also came into existence because of the border.” Therefore, border towns can “face each other across the line, but [have] fairly minimal mutual interaction” because according to Nugent, they can be “oriented toward their respective centers and have their backs turned to each other.” This is what was occurring for Chicano students at their institutions. Chicanos felt the university culture and curriculum excluded them because they did not reflect their experiences. Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderland theory aids in understanding the conflict between the Anglo American dominant community and Chicano students in a border town.

1.4.1. Borders within Universities

Anzaldúa theorizes, “Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them.” She further expounds that “[i]t’s not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger, and exploitation are the prominent features of this landscape.” The universities as border towns created an “us versus them” experience, which resulted in Chicano students’ alienation from their university communities. This alienation was not different from the alienation Chicanos still felt in spaces with a Mexican American majority,


210. Ibid., 558.

211. Ibid.


except there were no physical places where they could get Mexican food or cultural things, and when they went out into the community, it was still predominately white. These Chicano students’ increased awareness of their Chicano identity connects to Anzaldúa’s Borderland theory and the mestiza consciousness, which is a hybrid of both the indigenous and European identities which Chicanos move between or are in a state of in between.\textsuperscript{214} This hybrid identity gives populations the “ability to adapt and survive in often challenging realities and experiences of social and cultural duality.”\textsuperscript{215} Thus, engaging in the hybridity of their Chicano identity by connecting with their cultural heritage was a way for Chicanos to survive the challenges of being in a predominately white university in the Midwest.

Midwestern Chicano students also felt left out of the national voice and felt neglected, as writers of the student newsletters reveal. The editor of \textit{El Laberinto}, Zavala, points out:

There is a montón [Mountain] of Chicano writers and poets in the Midwest that nobody ever reads about. Going about business of staying alive, these writers and poets bury themselves and never surface because there is no outlet\textsuperscript{216}

To summarize, Zavala expresses how there are no spaces for self-expression in the Midwest. He feels alienated and uses poetry to maintain cultural significance. This lack of physical spaces enforced their assimilation and resulted in their alienation. Zavala laments:

\begin{quote}
Nosotros los estudiantes that come from the barrio, often come to the Anglo universities to bear witness to our own alienation. Alienation within the marble, concrete slabs of academia, wishy washy gavachito organizations . . . and to be deculturalized by hamburgermania and pizza\textsuperscript{217}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{214} Solis, “‘To Preserve Our Heritage,’” 31.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Zavala, “In Defense of the Chicano Poets and Writers”. Spanish translation is mine.
\item \textsuperscript{217} \textit{El Laberinto} 1, no. 5 (June 1973), Box 1, Newsletter Series, \textit{El Laberinto} Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. Gavachito is a diminutive form in Spanish of Gavachos, which is a derogatory term for Anglo Americans.
\end{itemize}
Zavala demonstrates the distinction between Chicanos students’ culture and the Anglo American culture found in these universities. He attributes the alienation of Chicanos to the lack of cultural reminders such as food, where the only options to participate on campuses were through student organizations that were not representative of Chicano culture. Chicano poetry also reveals the extent of the loneliness Chicano students felt, as “Carta de Iowa” by the UI student Arturo Ramirez implies:

Solito [Alone]
Solito Solito [Alone Alone]
Estoy [I am]
Espereando Esperando [Waiting Waiting]
Que vengas para me mellevas [sic] [That you will come and carry me]
Adonde esta el sonido de mi raza [Where is the sound of my raza?]
Estoy esperando [I’m waiting]
Para que me lleves [For you to carry me]
A mi barrio [to my neighborhood]
Que me lleves a mi casa [and you carry me home]

Ramirez’s feeling of isolation on campus is powerful because he uses the word “Solito” three times at the beginning of his poem. This poem also notes how alone Ramirez feels from not seeing other Chicanos represented, which he exemplifies by the line “Where is the sound of my Raza?” “Waiting, waiting” showcases how Ramirez is waiting for the Chicano population to grow so that he can build a sense of community, and “For you to carry me to my neighborhood and you carry me home” recognizes that he would feel more at home if there were a larger community where he could belong. The few Chicanos who were on each campus shared this


219. Arturo Ramirez, “Carta de Iowa,” Nahuatzen, 1, no. 2, (May–June 1972), Box 1, Newsletter Series, Nahuatzen Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa. “Carta de Iowa” translates to “A Letter from Iowa”. Spanish translation is mine.
sentiment, which motivated them to seek out others like themselves to find their campus community.

1.4.2. Chapter 1 Summary

The Chicano students at the UI, UW, UM, and U of I had a hybrid identity as a result of their translocal backgrounds. They were either native born in the Midwest to Southwestern parents, came from the Southwest themselves, or grew up in both areas as they traveled with their families to work in the fields. Once on these campuses Chicano students asserted their Chicano identity to reject the negative stereotypes that influenced both their education, as well as rejecting to assimilating to the Anglo American culture on their campuses. Still, due to the small number of Chicanos on campus and their lack of representation, Chicano students began to feel alienated at their universities and sought to find their community there.
When Chicano students entered the UM, UI, UW, and U of I, they felt isolated because these campuses did not reflect their Chicano identity. For example, UI graduate student Rusty Barceló, originally from California, found that coming to the Midwest was a struggle. During Barceló’s first winter in Iowa, she found herself cold, alone, and “miserable.” In the negative-five-degree temperature, she realized that she did not belong in Iowa and called her parents to tell them that she wanted to return to California. She thought her parents, “being good Mexican Americans who made certain that we understood our identity as Mexicans, would tell me to pack my bags right there and then and come home.” But they did not. Her mother told her, “Rusty, where there is one Mexican, there is probably another one.” Her mother sent her a care package as a cultural reminder of her Mexican identity, containing items such as dried pan dulce, chorizo, and the Virgin de Guadalupe—artifacts of her cultural identity. As Barceló recalls, “There was no note, but her message became clear.” For Barceló to survive at the UI, she needed to find her own community.

Seeking out a community was a sentiment Chicanos felt across the four institutions. They felt they had cultural distinctions that were not reflected in their university communities or the surrounding community. Barceló notes “there were no Mexican restaurants in that whole city

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220. Patty Meier, “Administrator Is Professionally and Personally Committed to Diversity at UI,” *Different Voices*, Box 3, Correspondence folder, Coll. IWA0188. Nancy “Rusty” Barceló Papers, Iowa Women’s Archives, The University of Iowa.

221. Meier, “Administrator Is Professionally and Personally Committed to Diversity at UI.”

222. Ibid.

223. Ibid.
To remedy this lack of Chicano presence, Chicano students sought out other students to gather enough numbers to make demands of their institutions for: (1) greater representation of Chicano students, faculty, and staff through recruitment; (2) inclusion of Chicano history through the establishment of Chicano Studies departments; and (3) spaces where they could seek refuge from the alienation they felt on campus through the creation of cultural centers. I argue that these Chicano students organized and made demands for similar reasons to other Chicanos across the nation, such as alleviating the alienation they felt on their campuses, validating and making visible their cultural heritage, and improving their educational outcomes.

But, how they organized and made demands depended on their regional identity. Due to the low representation of Chicanos at these universities and in the surrounding communities, they had to build coalitions and organize with non-Latinos and non-Chicano Latinos to get enough students to make demands. To justify these demands, they could not use the rhetoric of Midwestern land being formerly Mexico, like Southwestern Chicanos did, and instead relied on a different connection: the contribution Chicano laborers, including their parents, made to the Midwest in fields, factories, and railroad construction. Finally, I discuss what each of these demands did to further their goal of reflecting their cultural identity.

2.1. Where are the Chicanos?

The few Chicanos who were on these campuses began to research the demographics of the student and Chicano populations in their states. At the UM, undergraduate students de Rosales, Roybal, Castillo, and Chavarria learned there was a sizable Chicano population in Minnesota and wondered why they were the only four Chicano students on campus. They

recognized that “it was apparent that the university had done a bad job of recruiting Chicanos.”

At the UI, Barceló—like the students at UM—researched the Chicano population in Iowa and found it was much larger than she had realized and that the second-most-spoken language in Iowa was not German as she had anticipated but Spanish. As Barceló made these discoveries, she connected with another Chicano, Tony Zavala. Meeting another Chicano gave Barceló and Zavala the urge to organize. As Barceló recounts:

As a student, my first year there, I was pretty lonely because I missed my family, etcetera. But Tony . . . he’s an undergraduate from Chicago and Tony is all excited that I’m there. Of course, I don’t fit his stereotype either. I’m not an urban girl, but he’s happy that I’m a Chicana and he was happy that I called myself one . . . . That’s kind of how I started getting really involved and finding my place at Iowa, because it was familiar to me, the folks were familiar. We started pulling things together and doing things.

Zavala was already friends with Ruth Pushatenqua, a Native American woman, when Barceló met him. The three planned to organize a group that served both Chicanos and Native Americans. Chicano students sought out others who were likeminded, even if they were not Chicano. The importance of unity for Chicano students to achieve their goals is revealed by a UM Chicano student’s poem, “Arriba Carnales,” in which the author notes:

Hey Brother
Don’t get discouraged
There is always hope,
Without hope is the end of the struggle
…we need the power,
and the united, that together with
the love of our brothers will give
us strength to continue our development


This poem underlines the significance of Chicanos uniting to create a presence to combat the challenges of any Anglo American controlled institution. But Chicanos at these four universities had to organize with other groups such as Native Americans and non-Chicano Latinos—particularly Puerto Ricans—to build that force.

Coalition building among Mexican Americans and other groups is distinctive to the Midwest and was seen in the labor community as well. In “Latina/o Immigration Before 1965: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar Chicago,” Lilia Fernandez finds that outside Chicago, “[n]owhere else in the country did similar numbers of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans come to settle in a major urban area, drawn both by direct, state-sponsored labor recruitment and the promise of industrial wages.” Chicago was the third-largest city in the nation at that time and had even larger number of Chicanos than New Mexico did. It became “a primary destination, attracting thousands of women and men recruited to work in nearby agricultural fields, railroads, industrial workplaces, and other employment.” Chicanos and Puerto Ricans were connected because they were similar in both culture and language and were “repeatedly racialized as ‘nonwhite’ in the postwar era.” However, it is notable that the Chicano alliance with Puerto Ricans was not only seen at the U of I, which was in near Chicago, but also at the UM and UW, which were even farther away from the United States–Mexico border. Because there were enough similarities between Chicanos and Native Americans and Chicanos and other Latino ethnicities, Chicano students at these institutions needed to band together with others to create and maintain support systems.


229. Ibid.

230. Ibid.
Although Chicanos pushed to organize on these campuses, they all named their student organizations “Latin” or “Latino” to involve non-Chicano Latino ethnicities to find more members. Like other Latino ethnic groups, Chicanos were showcasing their right to their identity as well as maintaining their cultural distinctions, educating their campuses about their identity, and unifying to avoid alienation. At the UM, in the revised constitution of The Latin Liberation Front (LLF), they wrote, “The Latin Liberation Front (LLF) believes that the Latin Americans have a separate and distinct culture and have a right to maintain and further cultivate their culture, to enjoy it and pass it on to their heirs without hindrance, without apology, without shame.”231 They also sought to educate their campuses about their identity, writing, “The Latin Liberation Front is established to maintain, and further the culture, the rights and privileges of all Latin American people. To further the general welfare and education of all Latin Americans and to promote better understanding and relations between the Latins and the rest of the communities.”232 Lastly, Latino students at the U of I established their own student organization to find refuge from the alienation they experienced. There, Chicano students were also part of a pan-Latino movement to develop a Latino student organization to support Latino students. Sometime between 1969 and 1970, the Urban Hispanic Organization (UHO)—later called “La Colectiva Latina” (LCL)—was created to promote a “sense of identity in an atmosphere that was both alien and hostile.”233

231. “Revised Constitution of Latin Liberation Front (LLF),” La Raza, Box 1, Latin Liberation Front 1972 folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

232. Ibid.

At the UW, Chicano students participated in a multi-ethnic protest against the closing of the Afro-Center and Native American Center and the cancellation of the establishment of a Chicano cultural center. The centers were closing because the UW administration wanted to create one multi-ethnic cultural center. The next year, Chicano students formed a student organization, La Raza Unida (LRU) that included Puerto Ricans. A flyer from 1973 entitled “La Raza Organizes” states, “Let it be known that the University of Wisconsin cannot meet the needs of Chicanos y Boricuas on campus.” LRU had recently organized in Madison and soon held officer elections. Additionally, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans continued to build a coalition to help recruit and promote their educational attainment. They attempted to create El Instituto Educativo Estudiantil Chicano Boricua (The Chicano Puerto Rican Student Education Institute). In their proposal, they state that the institute will “provide an atmosphere which will attract Chicano–Boricua students to this campus and will provide services which will enable them to successfully participate in the University academic life. *El instituto* will create an environment that will encourage rather than hinder the educational process of the Chicano–Boricua on campus.” It is unclear whether this institute was ever developed, but it showcased the unity between Chicanos and Puerto Ricans with respect to improving the educational conditions of their communities on their campus. Yet at the UI, Chicanos unified not with Puerto Ricans but with Native Americans to improve their numbers on campus.


235. “La Raza Organizes, November 1, 1973.”


237. In the archives there was only the proposal for the instituto and there was no other indications via newspapers or student newsletters how far the students went with the proposal.
As noted above, at the UI, Zavala, Pushetonequa, and Barceló organized because there were small populations of both Chicano and Native American students and they sought to create a greater critical mass. Zavala notes the close relationship between Chicanos and Native Americans, recalling when he met Pushetonequa:

I always see the Indian Americans as our cousins, not very far from who we are . . . . So when I was trying to organize the students here, there were very few, and then I saw Ruth so alone, and I thought that our kindred spirits and solidarity and brotherhood, we’d make her our sister, too.238

Yet he knew Native Americans still had their own distinctive culture, “understanding that they have their rights and stuff”—but it would be sort of saying that our house is their house, too; not just thinking of us, but of other people.”239 Barceló, Zavala, and Pushetonequa applied for permission to create a student group that represented the UI’s Chicano and Native American student body, and they established the Chicano Indian American Student Union (CIASU) in 1970 and the Chicano Indian American Cultural Center (CIACC) a year later.240 They invited other Chicanos and Native Americans to participate, as Barceló recalls: “We invited people and I think nine people showed up. We were all excited.”241 One of the main reasons they created the CIASU was to provide a place where Chicanos at the UI could learn about their own cultural history. During the Chicano movement, Chicanos were focused on becoming more aware of their heritage to be a self-determinate community. Zavala was quoted in a Iowa City Press–Citizen article titled “Chicanos Seek to Keep the Mexican–American Identity,” saying, “We want to expose the Chicano to his own background and cultural so he can know who he is and function

238. Solis, “‘To Preserve Our Heritage,’” 85.
239. Ibid.
240. Ibid., 45.
in society and solve his own problems.” The purpose of the CIASU was “… to unify university Chicanos and Indians” and “to raise a social consciousness among our people who for so long have been brainwashed, denied, oppressed, and murdered, and to demand that the University of Iowa recruit more Chicano and Indian students from around the state.” Due to the small number of Chicano students at the UI, the few who were on campus wanted to maintain their Mexican heritage, which the CIASU and CIACC allowed them to do. As Barceló remembers, “We brought them to the Chicano house and the Indian house, and we wanted them to know that there was a place for them . . . because we realized we all needed it.” Coalition building was not the only thing distinctive to these Midwestern universities; the high number of Chicana student leaders also set them apart.

**2.2. Emergence of Chicana Leaders**

During the Chicano Youth Movement, Chicano leaders tended to be male, and Chicana women experienced sexism because most of them were relegated to secondary roles. Chicanas who identified as feminists were harshly criticized for supporting what were perceived as white feminist ideas and issues. For example, in 1970, when Corky Gonzales came to visit Chicano students at San Diego State University, a Chicana was the leader of the campus Chicano student group. At the time, the other Chicano students considered it improper that a national leader

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244. Barceló, “A Chicana’s Journey.”


would come to campus and “see that the organization’s leadership was female.” Sexism within the Chicano student movement meant that organizations were primarily male dominated and that meetings were conducted as if the goal of preserving Chicano identity could only be initiated and carried out by a man. The UI, U of I, UM, and UW all have documented evidence of the leadership efforts of Chicana students. This difference from the Southwestern Chicana experience could be explained by the small numbers of Chicanos in general at these Midwestern campuses; but, Barceló notes, this meant they could not afford to turn away anyone who wanted to lead.

Thus, Chicanas had more opportunities to lead. At all four institutions, many Chicanas served as presidents of their student organization. At the UM, de Rosales was the first LLF president in 1971. She was active in the recruitment of Chicanos to the UM throughout the 1970s, and she continued her activism throughout her life. She became the founder of Academia Cesar Chavez, a bilingual pre-K–6 charter school, and she created a Latino pre-college program at the University of St. Thomas, both of which are located in Saint Paul. At the U of I, Modesta Garcia was the first Latina director of La Casa Cultural Latina House during the 1979–1980 academic year, through which she was able to increase recruitment on the Urbana–Champaign campus and provide services for Latinos. In 1980, Modesta Garcia founded the Latino Graduate Celebration; a ceremony recognizing Latino graduates that continues to be held.

248. Ibid.
249. The UW did not have any Chicana activist with whom I could piece together an accurate depiction of Chicana student leadership, but there was a female president of their Chicano student organization, Sylvia Garcia, in 1975.
today. Modesta Garcia continues to work in admissions and career planning. At UI, Barceló was one of the leading founders of the CIASU and CIACC in the early 1970s. She became one of the most visible Chicana activists in Iowa City.

After twenty-seven years of activism at the UI, a University of Iowa Women’s Resource and Action newsletter describes Barceló as “the most influential and inspiring feminist in Iowa City.” According to Zavala, Barceló was perfect for leadership roles because of her “great skill with understanding and listening to people” and “ability to navigate administrative positions.” Barceló also was able to interact efficiently with the university’s administration; but, Zavala states, “Ruth and I were much too angry during those days to be nice to people, and of course I turned off a lot of them.” Additionally, Barceló’s successful recruitment of Chicano students across small towns in the Midwest changed student demographics at the university. Barceló had to navigate Chicano parents’ gender expectations of Chicana women, as illustrated by an episode where she had to reassure a worried father that his daughter would “not get pregnant or do drugs.” Barceló’s recruitment style was directly responsible for the increased enrollment of Chicanos, with the number of Chicano students increasing from nineteen in 1970 to thirty-five in 1971. Barceló actively recruited other Chicanas such as Adele Lozano, who served as the president of the student organization in the late 1970s. Lozano continued a career in student


252. Meier, “Administrator is Professionally and Personally Committed to Diversity at UI.”


254. Ibid.

255. Ibid., 108.

affairs at institutions at the UI and U of I, and she is currently an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. After the Chicano students organized with others into student groups, they made demands for more recruitment of students, faculty, and staff as well as the establishment of Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers.

### 2.3. Midwestern Chicano Student Demands

Throughout the early 1970s, Chicano students at these four institutions made demands by formal letters and/or meetings with university administrators. Although their lists contained anywhere from ten to twenty items, this study focuses on the three most common at the UI, UM, UW, and U of I: (1) recruiting more Chicano students, staff, and faculty; (2) creating of Chicano Studies departments; and (3) establishing cultural centers. One example of these demand letters is from the UI. On May 1, 1973, the student members of CIASU presented a letter to UI administrators with a list of ten demands, including the increased recruitment of Chicanos and establishment of a Chicano cultural center and Chicano Studies department. They first note that because the UI did not have services and/or spaces that acknowledged the cultural differences of the Chicano and Anglo communities, they were responsible for the disappearance of Chicano culture as well as the physical disappearance of Chicanos due to the lack of recruitment:

> We feel that the University of Iowa is a major contributor to the oppression and educational genocide of La Raza. We, the Chicano students of the Chicano Indian American Student Union, want to make the University of Iowa aware that the Chicano students are not willing to let this policy of neglect continue.


258. Solis, “To Preserve Our Heritage,” 45

259. “Chicano Indian-American Student Union Letter Given to President Willard Boyd in Person.”
The students point out that the failure of the UI was happening across the nation, which was also noted in the Chicano Studies department proposal at UW:

For, presently, the university has become the target American institution of Chicano youth in their struggle for social change and social justice. The fact that the University has become a target institution is not an isolated event, moreover, but generally reflects the historic failure of other American institutions (Mainly political and economical) to respond to the needs of the Chicano community.260

Thus, with their demand letters, Chicano students made their institutions aware of their neglect of the Chicano community, and they put the responsibility for correcting the situation on their administrations. As they note in the UI demand letter, “We feel that the University community must become aware of this gross neglect also. We feel that the University of Iowa in fulfilling its responsibility to Chicanos of Iowa should begin to the look into the educational solutions for our people.”261 Chicano students seeking educational equity was not unique to the Midwest because the entire Chicano Youth Movement was predicated the representation of Chicano identity on campuses. Yet Chicanos at these four institutions had different justifications for why their universities should meet their needs.

2.4. Demand Rationale: Chicano Contributions to the Midwest

In the UI demand letter, the writers cite statistics about the number of Chicano agricultural workers who came to Iowa and argue that the UI should meet their demands due to the Mexican and Mexican American economic contributions to the state. The letter reads:

We the Chicano Students at the University of Iowa are concerned with the present situation of our people throughout the country and especially at this state and at the University. The general situation of our people is one of subservience to the Anglo Institutions, which should be serving us not exploiting us. There are 15 million Chicanos in the country with 2 million living in the Midwest. Within the state of Iowa there are

260. Ibid.

261. “Chicanos Give Grievances to University Administration.”
35,000 Chicanos and within one year 10,000 Chicanos come from the Southwest to pick Iowa crops thus aiding in keeping up the state’s economy.\textsuperscript{262}

Starting the letter with the demographics of Chicanos in the United States and Midwest showcases their awareness of a sizable Chicano population compared with Iowa’s total population. They also recognize the migrant workers who came from the Southwest to the Midwest to work, stating, “Within the state of Iowa there are 35,000 Chicanos and within one year 10,000 Chicanos come from the Southwest to pick Iowa crops thus aiding in keeping up the state’s economy.”\textsuperscript{263} The letter expresses a relationship between the Chicano students and Chicanos outside the UI, extending not only to the 35,000 they cite who live in Iowa year-round but also the 10,000 Chicano migrants, suggesting the Southwest–Midwest network remained strong.\textsuperscript{264} The letter states that the signers are “concerned with the presentation of our people throughout the country and especially at this state.”\textsuperscript{265} They criticize the underrepresentation of Chicanos at the UI by pointing out that “The University of Iowa with a student population of 20,000 has only 60 Chicanos. We feel that the University of Iowa is a major contributor to the oppression and educational genocide of La Raza.”\textsuperscript{266} These strong words signify that the Chicano students believed university administrators had intentionally neglected the Chicano community, resulting in low Chicano enrollment. Additionally, they describe how many Chicanos who come

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{262} “Chicano Indian-American Student Union Letter Given to President Willard Boyd in Person.”
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{264} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{265} “Chicanos Give Grievances to University Administration.”
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
to the Midwest pick crops and contribute to Iowa’s economy.\(^{267}\) UW students also used this contribution through agriculture work and/or paying taxes state to demand a cultural house.

The UW created an Afro-Center and Native American center and made plans to create a Chicano student cultural center.\(^ {268}\) As noted above, in 1972, the UW’s board of regents closed down the Afro-Center and Native American Center and cancelled the Chicano student cultural center.\(^ {269}\) Chicano and Native American students held a joint press conference to express their anger and call for hiring more Chicano and Native American professors and administrators and reinstating the cultural centers. Robert Contreras, a leader among the Chicano students, told reporters, “as sons and daughters of Chicano and Native American taxpaying residents of the state of Wisconsin and in some cases, taxpayers ourselves, we demand that the board of regents enforce its affirmative action.”\(^ {270}\) This quote emphasizes how Chicanos and Native Americans were aware of the contributions their parents made to Wisconsin not only monetarily but as residents, demonstrating that they deserved the campus representation like all other taxpaying Wisconsin students were receiving. However, although the Chicano cultural center never came to fruition, Chicano students still demanded that the UW meet the needs of Chicano students throughout the 1970s and ’80s. Noting the Chicano student activism for Chicano Studies programs and more recruitment by this new generation of Chicano students, Jesus Salas—who was one of the original student activists in the 1970s—emphasizes the history of Chicano

\(^{267}\) Ibid.

\(^{268}\) The newspaper articles on this subject repeatedly state that the Native American Center was closing too, but there is no information about how it was created. Additionally, Kwame Salter, the Afro American Center Director, was the prominent figure who made all the speeches to the press. There was no mention of a Native American Center Director.


cultural and economic contributions to Wisconsin. He argues that Chicanos deserved better treatment from the University: “Our work has made Wisconsin flourish. We should be proud.”

Chicano cultural and economic contributions to the state were also an argument used at the UM.

Despite many of the Chicano demands made in the early 1970s at the UM, Chicano students still did not believe that the university was effectively recruiting Chicanos by 1976, when Chicano enrollment decreased even though Chicanos were the largest minority ethnic group in the state of Minnesota. Chicano Studies professor Manuel Guerrero wrote a letter on behalf of LLF to the UM administrators, providing a list of demands and an appeal for putting more attention and resources toward recruiting Chicano students, faculty, and staff, noting that these demands are the cumulation of such frustration by faculty, staff, and students in not having their concerns resolved by the CLA [College of Liberal Arts] dean’s office. They have not acted in the best interests of the department in accordance with the total university mission and communities serviced.

Chicano students, faculty, and community were concerned that the lack of Chicano student enrollment would negatively impact the growth of the Chicano Studies department and the progress they were making on campus. Chicano students were instrumental at pushing the administration further to establish a task force on Chicano concerns, which the associated press release says was done to “respond[] to the concerns expressed by Chicanos, Faculty, and Staff.” The university complied and created a 16-person task force that included student Maria Baltierra as the co-chair and made recommendations about how to meet the needs of Chicano

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272. Manuel Guerrero, “Letter to President, Peter McGrath,” May 1976, La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

students. These recommendations were a continuation of the demands the LLF made in the early 1970s such as the recruitment of more Chicano faculty, staff, and students and increased funding for the Chicano Studies department. Baltierra expressed optimism about these measures, noting that “[a]t the University, the most significant thing will be the creation of an awareness of the Chicano.”274 In the task force’s 1977 report to the UM administration, its justifications for meeting the needs of Chicanos center on the contributions Chicanos made to Minnesota. The report argues that Mexican immigrants came to Minnesota to work in its fields and factories and many have since made Minnesota home. The result has been an increase in the number of Mexican-origin Minnesotans from 5,000 to 50,000 in the past thirty years. This community has contributed considerably to the cultural and material well-being of the state and is now seeking to reap some benefit from its labors.275

This passage above clearly describes the Midwestern Mexican Americans’ settlement in Minnesota as a result following labor patterns to work in fields and factories. The task force asserts that Mexican Americans sought the same privileges afforded other residents of Minnesota, including the right to be educated at the UM. They expound:

What better way than to have it benefit from the outstanding education institutions which Minnesota has established? Clearly it is time that the state of Minnesota addressed the educational and professional needs of its Mexican-origin population, not only by increasing its educational opportunities but also by identifying, recruiting, and retaining potential Chicano academics and professionals who can address themselves to those needs.276

This passage points to the reasoning underlying the demands made by Chicanos at all four institutions, who sought to have their educational needs met by increasing Chicano


275. Ibid.

276. Ibid.
representation through students, faculty, and staff. In addition to recruitment, they demanded Chicano Studies and cultural centers to represent their cultural heritage provide spaces to express that heritage, as covered below.

2.5. Chicano Demands: Recruitment, Chicano Studies Departments, and Cultural Centers

For all four universities, recruitment was a chief demand Chicano student made. Their rationale was to develop a critical mass of students, as UHO member Rudy Garcia notes, “if you have no Latin population, you have no grounds to back up your other demands.” For all four institutions, the increased recruitment of more Chicano students, faculty, and staff was the most significant demand for which Chicano students worked for years to achieve. Although recruitment was also a main focus of Chicanos in the Southwest, it was even more urgent in the Midwest due to the low numbers of Chicanos not only at the universities, but in the surrounding communities.

2.5.1. Recruitment

Thirty members of the UHO met with U of I administrators to discuss their concerns in 1973. Reporting on the meeting, The Daily Illini notes that the Council on Higher Education for Spanish (CHESS) Chairman, Ellias Argott, and UHO member Ben Reyes challenged the effectiveness of the EOP for Latino students. Argott states that the “EOP has been a failure as far as the Latino community is concerned. The EOP, to my understanding, was not set up to meet only the needs of the blacks.” The lack of Latinos on campus was concerning to UHO


278. Ibid.
members because they believed that without a critical mass, there were limitations to the types of services that they could receive on campus. Recruitment was also important to Latinos because they felt that the U of I population should represent the population of the state of Illinois. During the early 1970s, only seven percent of the students in the EOP were Latino, which was a significant underrepresentation given that Latinos made up ten percent of the total population of Illinois. The students asked the university to increase its enrollment of Latino students by 150 Latinos to reflect the Latino population of the state. The U of I administrators acknowledged this underrepresentation and said it was an area of concern for them. However, the university did not back up their words with actions until it received further demands from the Chicano students, which will be explored in additional detail in chapter four.

UI Chicano students also focused on recruitment and intended the CIASU to give current Chicano students resources to promote to prospective Chicano students. Barceló notes that “[t]he sad thing is that we don’t have much to offer incoming Chicano and Indian students except the cultural center.” CIASU members also focused on helping Chicano high-school students “realize their potential at a university even if their high school counselors thought of them strictly as junior college material, immediate employees, or probable dropouts.” Their efforts in Chicano student recruitment resulted in increasing the Chicano population. The Chicano students’ drive for recruitment was similar to the U of I in that it focused on gaining enough students to unify and create change. Barceló asserts that Chicanos at Iowa would not “be

279. Ibid.
282. Ibid.
283. “Chicano, Indian Student Union to Preserve Heritage, Identity.”
satisfied until there is a significant number of Chicano and Indian students here so we can finally accomplish something.” Chicano and Latino students had to take the recruitment initiatives upon themselves.

At the UM, the *Minnesota Daily* reports that when the LLF formed, there were ten Chicano students enrolled, and that the LLF planned to recruit on the behalf of the university. Chicanos were the second-largest minority ethnic population in Minnesota, yet there were few Chicanos on campus. The LLF began working with the Office of Admissions, and as a result, it recruited “almost all of the 25 Mexican American students that will be attending the university for the first time next fall [1970].” As a result of their efforts and attracting students to UM, Chicano students decided they should get paid for their recruiting work, as LLF member Costello notes: “As first we took it upon ourselves to recruit. Then we figured we should get paid for it.” The LLF met with UM President Malcolm Moos, Dr. James Reeves in a series of four or five meetings. As a result of the meetings, two Chicano students began working part-time in the Office of Admissions. However, Chicano students had difficulty in getting the university officials to move forward on their request, as LLF member Chavarria observes: “Basically nothing was done, they only budged when we yelled at them.” Despite the slow progress by the university administration, Chicano students made continual demands over the 1970s not only

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284. Schrader, “Recruiting Efforts Double Chicano, Indian Enrollment.”


for increased recruitment but also the implementation of Chicano Studies departments.

2.5.2. Chicano Studies Departments

Chicano Studies departments were a main demand for Chicanos across the nation due to the emergence of the Chicano higher-educational plan called El Plan de Santa Barbara. This plan outlined the need for a Chicano Studies discipline for Chicano history to be reinserted into history not as passive victims in a colonized group but as an active community whose members made contributions to the United States. Additionally, Chicanos did not merely make contributions to the U.S., but had a distinct cultural identity. This plan also influenced Chicanos at these four institutions, who listed its tenets in their student-created newsletters. For example, in their proposal for a Chicano Students department at the UW, Chicano students justify their demand accordingly:

The fulfillment of individual as well as of community needs is inherent in the concept of Chicano Studies. Due to the racist character of United States society, now a validly documented and widely-recognized fact, in the past only individual Mexican Americans were able to obtain moderate status and success in a society dominated by Anglo values and institutions. For individual Mexican Americans, however, the price of assimilation resulted, almost invariably, in a turning away from the community. As a result, the Chicano community remained exploited, backward, and static: a grave contradiction of the written democratic and egalitarian concepts which the United States aims its foundations.

According to this passage, Chicano students were fighting against assimilation, which they blamed for their second-class status in the United States. They also note that by assimilating, they would reject their own population, so a Chicano Studies department could unite Chicanos under a collective identity that would retain their cultural heritage. Chicanos at all four

universities demanded Chicano Studies departments, but the UM was first to establish one—and the only one to do so—in the 1970s.

At the UM, after the LLF made its initial demands, Chicano students felt that the Chicano Studies department was not a top priority for the university. In 1971, LLF members confronted Assistant Vice President for Administration Eugene Eidenberg and Assistant Vice President for Academic Administration Fred Lukerman for over two hours in Morrill Hall, insisting on administration support for a Chicano Studies department. Chicano students demanded that Eidenberg and Lukerman adopt the proposal for the department within seventy-two hours or they would begin to picket. 291 Although they encountered barriers to the creation of the department, the UM established the first Chicano Studies department in the Midwest in fall 1972. The stated goal of the new department was to focus on the “study of the history, culture, and language of Americans of Mexican decent.” 292 The proposal laid out five objectives: (1) provide an academic focal point of identification for the Chicanos and their way of life; (2) provide needed course sequences for Chicano students; (3) provide opportunities for non-Chicano students to learn about the cultural and historical heritage of Chicanos; (4) provide a base for inquiry into various aspects of Chicano life and culture; (5) provide a base for further institutional provision for the community. 293 The establishment of the Chicano Studies department arose from the success of the Chicano students’ continuous protests. It created a space at the UM where Chicano students could feel represented. Graduate student Alfredo Gonzalez, the acting chair of Chicano Studies department, notes that the department was


292. “‘U’ Regents Establish Chicano Studies Dept.,” University of Minnesota News Press Release, February 11, 1972, La Raza, Box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

293. Ibid.
interested in “reach[ing] the existing Minnesota Chicano community” and teaching the
community about Mexican and Mexican American history.\textsuperscript{294} Thus, the Chicano Studies
department not only learned about what was happening in the Southwest, but also specially
focuses on the condition of Chicanos in Minnesota. The UM’s creation of a Chicano Studies
department inspired students at other schools such as UW to advocate for their own Chicano
Studies departments.

In the 1970s, Chicano students at the UW looked to the UM’s establishment of a Chicano
Studies department as a model. The UW compared the Chicano demographics in Wisconsin and
UW to those of the UM and Minnesota to make their case. An untitled flyer in the UW’s
Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies program archives references the UM’s Chicano Studies
department:

\begin{quote}
Fact: The University of Minnesota has a state Chicano population of 29,000 and they
have a complete Chicano Studies Department. The University of Wisconsin has a state
Chicano population of 41,000 to 65,000 yet does not have any Chicano Studies Program
or department.\textsuperscript{295}
\end{quote}

Chicanos at the UW spent the entire 1970s and 1980s fighting the UW administration to
establish a Chicano Studies department. They thoroughly explain their need for such a
department in their proposal, writing:

\begin{quote}
The Chicano university student movement throughout the United States, on the threshold
of organization maturity and a new phase of political involvement, has defined its
demands for a relevant education experience in terms of Chicano Studies Departments.
La Raza Unida considers crucial for the interests of all those involved the complete
understanding, by the entire UW–Madison Administration, of the underlying social and
cultural premises upon which the concept of Chicano Studies rest.\textsuperscript{296}
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{294} John Kelly, “Chicano Studies Department, 1st in Midwest, Opens at U.” Dispatch, October 25, 1972.
\textsuperscript{295} “Handout,” May 5, 1973, box 6, Chicano Studies—Miscellaneous Correspondence Folder, coll.
2011/165, MEChA, University of Wisconsin–Madison University Archives, University of Wisconsin–Madison.
\textsuperscript{296} “La Raza Unida Press Release.”
\end{flushleft}
They argue that a Chicano Studies department is a “relevant” type of education for Chicano students and that it would end the neglect shown by UW administration to their cultural history. They end the proposal by challenging the UW’s promotion of being a leader in higher education, noting:

Chicano students are seeking an authentic freedom of expression within the University and society at large. Our call is for authentic diversification of United States culture, a prospect which can only enrich the university’s fulfillment of its cultural mission. The University of Wisconsin should—in keeping with its tradition—lead the way, rather than follow.297

These Chicano students tried to put themselves back into the history of U.S. culture. At the UW, they were not able to establish a Chicano Studies department during the 1970s, and the UW never established a Chicano cultural center—but that did not stop them for seeking an “authentic freedom of expression.” Chicanos across the other three institutions sought freedom for expression of identity through the establishment of cultural centers.

2.5.3. Cultural Centers

Cultural centers for Chicanos students were created at the UI, UM and U of I.298 For Chicano students, these centers provided spaces where they could come together as a community, maintain their cultural heritage, and survive the alienation they felt on their campuses. Additionally, Chicano cultural centers played a significant role in recruiting prospective Chicano students.

297. Ibid.

298. The Chicano students at the UW demanded a Chicano cultural center, which was originally approved by administrators, but it was canceled when the administration shifted to a single, multi-ethnic cultural center.
At the UI, Barceló, Pushetonequa, and Zavala established the CIACC in the early 1970s as members of the CIASU. They wanted to do so because they knew the campus Chicano population was small and that retaining Chicano students would be challenging, as Barceló herself considered dropping out when she first arrived. Thus, they knew that merely bringing students to campus was not enough to recruit effectively. In the article “Chicano–Indian Center to Relocate,” Chicano students note the limited number of Chicanos at the UI compared with the state population to emphasize importance of the cultural center, stating, “Of the 20,000 Chicanos in Iowa, there are 80 now enrolled at UI.” The goal of the center was to provide academic counseling and assistance and a place, as student Arturo Ramirez notes, that “affords an escape from subtle prejudice.” The cultural center provided a space where Chicanos could escape from the isolation they felt on campus. These Chicano students did not believe they should maintain or learn about their heritage because they had a large population—they believed it because there was only a small one. As Barceló notes, “Iowa has a unique problem because of its relatively small number of Chicanos. In California where I came from there is one of the greatest concentrations of Chicanos in the country. In Iowa they are easier to hide.” Because Chicano populations on Midwestern campuses were small, Chicano students felt more urgency to maintain their cultural identity. Chicano students’ preservation of heritage through the establishment of a Chicano cultural center was also tied to recruiting Chicano students in the rural parts of Iowa, as “most of the Chicanos in Iowa are migrants who came in trucks from

299. Solis, “To Preserve Our Heritage,” 120.


301. Ibid.

302. Lentz, “Chicanos Seek to Keep the Mexican–American identity.”
Texas to work in the fields around Muscatine, Davenport, and Mason City.”\(^{303}\) The cultural center also served as a retention strategy; as Barceló notes, “we want to bring students here and keep them here.”\(^{304}\) The Chicano students going into the community in Iowa were effective because they earned the trust of the Mexican and Mexican American migrants and their families. They could speak to them in a way that UI non-Chicano recruiters could not due to their shared background and values.

At the U of I, Dean of Campus Programs and Services Dan Perrino and faculty members such as Bilingual–Bicultural Professor Dr. Henry Trueba in their efforts to establish a Latino cultural center, supported Latino students. Perrino particularly recognized that the U of I needed more services for Latino students. He saw firsthand the alienation Latinos felt on campus, as he observes in a letter to Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Affairs Stanley R Levy:

> Another important aspect is that there is no Latino community in Champaign–Urbana. For all practical purposes their community is what they develop for themselves through the cultural house programs and activities. A fair number of Latino students still have the feeling of being outsiders. It will take time to eliminate this feeling.\(^{305}\)

With the support of Perrino, Latino students submitted a proposal for La Casa Cultural Latina House. La Casa Cultural Latina House became a space where Latinos had bilingual programs and brought in speakers who dealt with issues important to Latinos.

Similar to the UI, the U of I Latino students used their cultural house as a recruitment tool. Their Latino cultural house proposal explains why they needed a space that could house programs to make prospective students feel welcomed:

\(^{303}\) “Seek to Increase Minority Enrollment.”

\(^{304}\) Ibid.

\(^{305}\) Daniel Perrino, “A Letter to Stanley R. Levy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus Affairs, Re. Your Letter of April 8, 1975—Latino Students, Their Involvement, etc.,” April 18, 1975.
During the past three or four years, the Latino students on campus have progressively become more vocal in policies that directly affect us and our committees through the state. We have directed much of our energy toward increasing the number of Latino students at this university, we have also recognized the need for increasing supportive services and programs for the existing students on campus.

Latino students used the house as a space to offer prospective and current Latino students’ ways to build a community and express their cultural identity. LCL used the space to house artistic programing, a lecture series, and Spanish conversation groups. Latino students also created a proposal for a community activities project that would help provide funding for these events. They argue in the proposal that there needed to be programing to make Latinos feel connected rather than isolated from campus by virtue of their small student population:

On this campus of 35,000 students fewer than 100 Latino students are enrolled. There is no Latino community in the surrounding area, no place where these students can find a feeling of belonging. Without proper support to carry out activities of this project, Latino students on campus will continue to remain isolated from both the university community and the Latino community as well.

Latino students felt that this project would help combat their sense of loneliness because they could see themselves reflected on campus through lectures about their history and culture.

The arts again played a role in the expression of Chicano identity as a part of the La Casa Cultural Latina House proposal, where one of the goals for the center was to maintain a space for creativity. As the proposal writers note, “The house would stimulate the Latinos own creativeness in respect to art, literature, drama and other aspect of our individual culture.” The proposal indicates that students asked for a library that focused on “Latino arts” which would


307. Urban Hispanic Organization, “Proposal for the Community Activities Project,” Programs & Activities folder, coll. 41/64/40, La Casa Cultural Latina Records, UIUC Library University Archives, University of Illinois

308. La Colectiva Latina, “La Casa Cultural Latina Proposal.”
“enrich our resources which are presently insufficient.”\(^{309}\) This showcases how Latinos educated themselves on their culture in a way they felt that the university failed to do. A central goal of the house was for students to have a space where they could create programming such as lecture series and cultural activities that represented Latino culture for the Latinos on campus and where they could build up the Latino community. Yet the Latino students also sought to educate the greater community about the Latino culture. In a *Daily Ilini* article titled “Latino House Launches Second Year of Varied Cultural Activities,” La Casa Coordinator Ben Rodriquez says, “The center is not just for Latins. It was set up to introduce the Latin culture to the University.”\(^{310}\) In the 1974–75 academic year, Latino students aimed their efforts at the recruitment and retention of additional Latinos by organizing a Latino day that “encompassed some folk dances, music, poetry, plays, and the depiction of the life and styles of various Latino cultures.”\(^{311}\) To recruit and retain more Latino students, current Latino students also wanted the center to express their cultural heritage and asked for a “four-wall mural, depicting the lives of students entering the University of Illinois, becoming involved in their academic pursuits, seeking the meaning of life, graduating and facing the challenges of the real world.”\(^{312}\) This came to fruition with a mural painted by Oscar Martinez, then a junior, in the cultural house.

A *Daily Ilini* article titled “The House Where Walls Can Talk” profiles Martinez and describes the floor-to-ceiling images. Martinez notes that the mural was the “best expression of the intense problems and pressures which they [Latinos] feel as a small minority group on

\(^{309}\) Ibid.

\(^{310}\) Ibid.

\(^{311}\) Ibid.

\(^{312}\) Laura Castaneda, “La Casa: Bringing Latino Culture to Campus for 10 Years.” *The Daily Ilini*, October 10, 1984.
Martinez emphasizes the importance of the mural, saying, "This mural is really a part of us because it is a picture of our hopes and fears." A photograph of mural is featured the newspaper, but due to the poor quality of the paper, the written description provides the best visualization:

The sea of intensely-emotional faces and figures painted on the four walls of the house’s living room captures expressions of hope and fear, joy and sadness, tears, and smiles, anger and forgiveness, but almost are characterized by an upward look, a look into the future, a payer that sorrow will bring something better than today. One of the most outstanding figures in the mural is a Latin American woman whose eyes are tilted towards the sky. In her left hand she is thrusting forward a diploma. In her right hand a beam of light extends upward.

His work of art was the “result of the opinions and feelings of Latino students here . . . . [W]orking on this mural has made us more unified as a group.” Again, the arts were used here as a place to build community among Latino students because this mural represented a common experience they all shared. It gave the Latino students a sense of a hope after recognizing that the problems they faced could be remedied if they unified as a large group. This mural was significant to community building for students, as La Casa Cultural Latina House Director Phillip A. Llamas observes: “The artwork and the mural, especially, have come to symbolize the Latino spirit in the University community. The house has become for them a home away from home.” The U of I’s establishment of La Casa Cultural Latina House and its Latino students’ focus on using the house as a space for the arts was a way they could understand themselves and build a community. The Latino students at the U of I used the house to hold many activities from

314. Ibid.
315. Ibid.
316. Ibid.
the year of its establishment during 1970s; for example, in the fall semester of 1975, they coordinated over 20 lectures in collaboration with their university’s lecture committee. Like the Chicanos at the UI, the Latino students wanted to preserve their heritage, especially on a campus where they did not see themselves reflected in the faculty, classrooms, and/or greater community. This preservation was imperative to their survival on campus.

2.6. Chapter 2 Summary

Chicanos arrived at these four Midwestern universities aware that they were very few in number there. To alleviate loneliness and alienation from their campuses, they sought out other students to find a community. Yet due to the small number of Chicano students, they had to organize with other groups such as Puerto Ricans and Native Americans to create a larger mass of students to make their demands. Although their groups were still relatively small, they made official student organizations: LRU at the UW, La Latina Colectiva at the U of I, LLF at the UW, and the CAISU at UI. These student organizations demanded that their institutions have faculty, student recruitment, and curricula that reflected their culture as well as houses and/or spaces where they could build a community through shared backgrounds. They wanted the universities to know they were not like other students there but rather had cultural differences they wanted to maintain. They sought to make their identity visible to their universities’ administrations, student communities, and surrounding communities.
CHAPTER 3: “NO ONE ASKED US IF WE WANTED TO BE COUNTED”

CHICANO EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCES

As a part of their demands at the UM, Chicano students demanded funding for an “awareness” conference. The goal of awareness conferences was to provide speakers and workshops for Chicanos, Latinos, and the greater non-Latino population to understand the cultural heritage of Chicanos and the needs of that community. At the UM’s first awareness conference in 1970, Chicanos’ pride in their culture emerged. A local newspaper article, “Chicano Power Gains Support at Conference,” describes a scene of about sixty Chicano students and community members shouting “Chicano power!” and unifying together in St. Paul “to sing and to hear speeches.”318 This scene is not completely surprising because Chicano students from the Midwest were present at the 1969 National Youth Conference in Denver, where Corky Gonzales introduced *El Plan Espiritual*. Latin Liberation Front (LLF) members heard this call loud and clear, and they demanded funds from the UM to hold their own conference a year later. The fact that Chicanos in the Midwest organized their own conference demonstrates that they felt they shared the same experience of being a colonized population. But Chicano students in the Midwest were not just copying what Chicanos in the Southwest were doing; they felt they were a part of the national conference because they, too, were suffering from educational inequality. In this chapter, I argue that Chicano students made the hybrid identity of their connection to the Southwest and Midwest visible through awareness conferences’ to be understood by their greater university campuses. In the Midwest, Chicano students also explored their hybrid identity through the creation of these conferences.

Chicano students who participated in conferences at Midwestern universities believed they were participating in the national dialogue about identity, but they also felt overlooked due to many Chicanos in the Southwest’s view that Midwestern Chicanos were culturally deprived. For example, UI Chicana student leader Rusty Barceló points out that conferences served as a space to make issues Chicanos faced in the Midwest more visible, stating, “That’s what our conference was about. We had a conference to show that we are alive and well and these issues were important to us.” The Chicano students from UM were influenced by the Denver conference in March 1969, but Chicanos across the nation would have attended any type of conference that focused on Chicano issues. Barceló remembers the reach the UI’s 1973 conference had, saying, “We became national . . . and there was such a need—there were so few of these Chicano things happening that this became a huge thing.” Therefore, the network between the Southwest and Midwest Chicano students was maintained through Chicano conferences on their campuses. I argue in this chapter that Chicano students who organized and participated in conferences at the UI, UM, UW, and U of I sought to be included in this national dialogue about Chicano identity and wanted to make their existence in the Midwest known to their universities and greater communities. This increased visibility was no different from what Chicanos across the nation sought, but Chicano in the Midwest felt invisible not only to their Eurocentric institutions but also to Chicanos from the Southwest. At the time, Chicano students were actively fighting against two ideas: (1) Chicanos in the Midwest were assimilating in the same way as their European counterparts; and (2) Midwestern Chicanos were “culturally

319. These universities included the UM, UI, UW, and U of I.


321. Ibid.
deprived” because of their geographical distance from Atzlán, as illustrated in a statement by Ravid Trejo, a junior originally from Texas who was one of the organizers of the 1970 Midwest Chicano Conference at the UM. Trejo states that this conference benefited Midwestern Chicano students because they were “culturally deprived.” People in the Midwest have lost their heritage and don’t know what it means to be a Chicano.” Trejo’s description of the Midwestern Chicano as “culturally deprived” is the type of label that many other Chicano students in the Midwest were actively trying to escape, and they did so by using the conferences as an educational tool to show that the Chicano issues that were occurring nationally were also important to Chicanos in the Midwest. I demonstrate how Chicano students’ hybrid identity is seen in Midwestern Chicano students unifying with Southwestern Chicanos to make themselves visible to them via these conferences, which also served as spaces where Chicano students could consider the nuances of Chicano identity by considering the diversity of the Chicano population within the Midwest.

3.1. Midwestern Chicano University Conferences: Creating Awareness of Their Chicano Identity

Chicano students at the U of I, UM, and UW began to petition for and create awareness conferences in the early 1970s. Although there is less documentation about the conferences at the

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322. Valdés, *Barrios Norteños*, 18; “‘U’ to Host Chicano Conference: Activities Scheduled for Today,” *Minnesota Daily*, December 2, 1970. This article notes that Trejo is the organizer, but there was a different description in the oral history that discussed the many students involved in the conference.

323. “‘U’ to Host Chicano Conference: Activities Scheduled for Today.”

324. Although all four universities had some form of conference, the UM’s 1970 awareness conference and 1970 higher-education summer institute as well as the UI’s 1973, 1974, and 1975 conferences serve as the best examples for exploring the topics Chicano students addressed at these types of events.
UW, one brochure indicates that a conference occurred with the goal of maintaining their heritage:

La Raza Unida of Madison would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you who have come here. In the many struggles, both here on campus and in the society as a whole, our Raza has endured many setbacks and only a few triumphs in our fight for equality of opportunity and recognition of our many contributions of our cultura. Yet, it is our heritage and culture that gives us faith and strength to continue to struggle.325

This passage indicates that Chicano students at this conference reasserted their confidence because they were looking for recognition of the “contributions of our cultura.” It also demonstrates that Chicanos used their heritage as a way to persevere over the challenges of being a Chicano in the United States. These philosophies were also found at the U of I. In 1974, Hugh Satterlee, vice chancellor for campus affairs at the U of I, sent a conference proposal to Chancellor J.W. Peltason on behalf of the La Colectiva Latina (LCL). The proposal requested that the university sponsor a Latino awareness conference that would “create awareness among Anglo-American administrators and teachers of the importance of the role that education can play in the Latino society.”326 The second goal was to create “an awareness symposium to synthetize faculty, administrators, students, and prospective students to the needs and responses of people of a ‘different’ ethnic or nationalistic background.”327 As noted in previous chapters, Latino students felt that their universities were not meeting their needs and often had to rely on themselves to educate themselves about their own community. LCL’s proposal notes, “We hope


326. La Colectiva Latina, “Proposal for Symposium,” April 6, 1974, Record Series 41/64/40, La Casa Cultural Latina, Box 1, Folder: “Articles & Brochures on Latinos,” UIUC Library University Archives, University of Illinois.

the symposium will develop an understanding that in order to improve the education of Latinos, one must also be aware of the culture." Similar to the Denver and Santa Barbara conferences, Latinos at the U of I also saw education as a key way to recapture control of their economic, social, and political conditions, as showcased by the type of speakers they wanted to involve in their conference.

The proposal for the Latino awareness symposium at the U of I suggest that Latino students had contacted speakers who could help remedy the educational deficits they felt existed on campus. Latino students encountered English-only classrooms, a push by schools toward vocational education, and schoolteachers’ and administrators’ lack of general understanding of Latino culture. The LCL invited Henry Trueba, the U of I’s director of the Bilingual–Bicultural Program, to open the discussion about how Spanish-speaking communities benefit by having bilingual–bicultural programs in their schools. These issues in the Midwest were similar to the topics found at the Denver and Santa Barbara conferences, showing that Chicanos promoted bilingual–bicultural education in schools nationally. Latino students at the U of I also contacted a professor of elementary education from Chicago State University “to give a talk about numerous educational opportunities and options other than vocational [ones].” The conference’s focus on providing Chicano students options for life after high school reflected Chicano students’ complaint that Chicano youths were being put into educational tracks only for vocational work. Lastly, the students contacted a Harvard graduate student in sociology to “present why culture plays an important part in the education of Latinos.” The speakers the LCL chose shows its

328. La Colectiva Latina, “Proposal for Symposium.”
329. Ibid.
330. Ibid.
agency. They were aware of their own community needs; as the proposal writers indicate, “We are bringing this symposium to the University of Illinois with the expectation to create a mutual understanding that can bring beneficial alterations in the education [of] Latinos.”

Latino students took it upon themselves to ensure that Latino youths were shown a different educational path outside vocational education to increase Latino enrollment and attainment at institutions of higher education in the Midwest.

These goals of the Chicano students who organized the Chicano awareness conference at the UM were similar to those of the Latino awareness symposium at the U of I. At the UM, one of the original Chicano demands was to hold a “Chicano awareness conference” in December of 1970. Chicano students created this conference to make the greater UM community aware that they existed on campus. The 1970 Chicano Midwest Conference included a call to Chicanos everywhere to unite; the conference brochure notes, “Hermanos y Hermanas: Help us reunite our people by discussing the problems we have in common through the Midwest.”

The Chicano conference organizers had a program in the local Minneapolis/St. Paul community that included discussions on Chicanos seen as an educational problem for schools, Chicano political workshops, and Chicana experience workshops led by LLF student president de Rosales. Conference speakers came from California, Illinois, and Colorado, including Denver Youth

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332. “Chicano Midwest Conference, 1970,” University of Minnesota Flyer, La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

333. “Program in Barrio,” Program for the Chicano symposium. La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
Liberation conference creator Corky Gonzales. Similar to the goals of the Latino awareness symposium at the U of I, the 1970 Chicano Midwest Conference at the UM was a way for Chicano students to make themselves visible to the greater university campus. These conferences constituted action on the part of Chicano students to make their universities cognizant of their existence and to declare to university officials they were not going to fade away until they were heard.

The Chicano conferences also educated university administrators on issues important to Chicanos. At the UI’s A Positive Director for the Chicano Movement Conference in 1973, the goal was “to increase public awareness of the human needs of Chicanos in Iowa.” Chicanos strove for recognition of their existence on campus by university officials. At this conference, the UI president at the time, Willard Boyd, revealed the evolution of his understanding of the Chicano experience at Iowa and confessed his previous assumptions that Chicanos were limited to the only Southwest. Boyd describes this realization:

It’s quite clear that this second conference in what I hope will be a long-sustained series, evidences the importance of Chicanos in this part of the country. I learned last year as we have learned throughout the year that this is not just a matter of places in the Southwest United States, it is just as important in the Middle West. I would also like to say that I am impressed by what our Chicano students are doing on this campus—their way of reaching out to the state and to the region . . . . I simply say that for the real point that was mentioned earlier that many people do not think that there is a problem in this state with respect to Chicanos, I do realize it, I do consider it a matter of prime importance.


336. Willard Boyd, “Keynote: Opening Remarks,” (Conference Presentation, “A Positive Direction for the Chicano Movement,” The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, April 14, 1973), Box 1, “Chicano ’73 in Iowa” Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
President Boyd’s comment about learning “last year” how important Chicanos were in the Midwest reveals how ignorant the university was about their presence in the region. I find most notable Boyd’s statement about being impressed “by what our Chicano students are doing on this campus”; it reveals how much responsibility Chicano students bore to attend to their own issues because the university was not meeting their educational and social needs. Panelists and keynote speakers at the conference consistently challenged these two issues over the course of the conference.

3.1.1. Chicano Students Assert Their Presence in the Midwest

In addition to the 1970 Chicano Midwestern Conference at the UM, Chicano students also held a week-long summer institute in 1970 where Chicano students, faculty, staff could meet to discuss the establishment of a Chicano Studies department in the Midwest. Participants came from Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Illinois, Kansas, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Migrant field workers from Texas and Chicago also participated. By the end of the week, participants decided that the UM would be the university where a Chicano Studies department could be developed. The conference participants’ justification for why there should be a Chicano Studies department was to study “Mexicans in their struggle to settle in the Midwest.”337

One of the organizers, graduate student Alfredo Gonzalez, gave an opening address at the institute that revealed how Chicano students wanted to be counted in the national Chicano Movement. Chicano students, faculty, and community members reaffirmed their Chicano identity at the institute. Gonzalez’s opening remarks note the invisibility Chicanos in the Midwest felt: “The presence of the Chicano in the Mid-West is an obvious but neglected fact that

337. Alfredo Gonzalez, “Chicano Studies and Mid-West Higher Education,” Chicano Studies Institutes, Summer 1971, National Endowment for the Humanities, La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
must be studied in order to understand his participation in the economic development of the region through agriculture and industry.”

This comment shows the beginning of the Chicanos’ understanding of their identity in the Midwest as it relates to Mexican’s and Mexican American’s labor and contributions to building the region. Chicanos students in the Midwest used this understanding in their demand for universities to pay more attention to Chicanos, as explored in chapter two. Gonzalez also expounds on the misconception that Chicanos only existed in the Southwest: “In the Mid-West the argument has been advanced that a few Mexican communities are to be found outside the Southwest, in such cities as Chicano, Detroit, Gary, and Kansas City, but these colonies are not significant.”

This was not the case, as demonstrated by the large population of Chicanos in Illinois; Gonzalez further asserts, “However, the presence of “LA RAZA” in large numbers is certainly not limited to the Southwest, indeed it has been established that there are more Chicanos in Chicago than in all of New Mexico.”

This comment reveals the desire of Chicanos in the Midwest to proclaim their existence and show that their experiences and issues were just as worthy as those of Chicanos in the Southwest. Gonzalez also calls out that a smaller Chicano population in the Midwest should not play a role in whether or not a Chicano feels a connection to their Mexican heritage. Gonzalez challenges what was counted as a large number of Chicanos in a given location:

What ‘significant numbers’ means is a matter of perspective. The truth is that the Chicano can be found in considerable numbers throughout the Mid-West. From his[Chicano] possibly oldest settlement in Kansas City, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to Omaha, Nebraska, Detroit, Michigan, St. Louis, Missouri, Columbus, Ohio, Mason City, Iowa, to us, in Minnesota, the Chicano voice is shouting to be heard.

338. Ibid.
339. Ibid.
340. Ibid.
341. Ibid.
Although Chicanos in the Midwest were not as populous as those in the Southwest, this quote shows that their smaller population did not make their experience any less valid. The conferences were a place for Chicanos in the Midwest to raise their voices and be heard, as Gonzalez proclaims:

From all over the Mid-West, Chicanos say: ¡WE ARE HERE! ¡AQUÍ ESTAMOS! ¡La Raza de Atzlán! Nobody ever asked us if we wanted to be counted. Nobody ever told us we were being counted. The secret of our existence has been so remarkably kept that even Chicano scholars have not noted our numbers, and yet from Minnesota to Wisconsin, to Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio we can find and see our people at fiestas, weddings, christenings and yes, in ever present fields and in the city industries.342

The conferences and the summer institute, in particular, also show how Chicanos considered the nuances of Chicano identity. If the Chicanos in the Midwest had been immigrants or culturally deprived, the need for Chicano Studies departments or Chicano services would not have existed. However, Chicanos in the Midwest were seeking Chicano Studies departments at a time when Chicanos in the Southwest were doing the same. Gonzalez explains:

It is the Chicano presence which can no longer be ignored, and which is crying out and demanding its constitutional rights, that is the force behind the challenge facing institutions of higher learning in the Mid-West. This challenge can be met primarily through the establishment of Chicano studies departments343

Chicanos in the Midwest acted as their own advocates on campus and proclaimed that they were not new to the Midwest. They emphasized this point throughout the conferences, and Gonzalez concludes his address by pointing out the Midwestern claim to the land through labor:

We are not new to the area, some of our Mid-West people are third, fourth, and fifth generation Mid-Westerners. Eighty-five percent of our people are native born United States citizens, and we are by nature and heredity AMERICANS, and Americans in the truest sense of soil heredity. Our people first came to the Mid-West in the cattle drives to Kansas, from there to the meat packing firms in Chicano, Milwaukee and St. Paul, then to

342. Ibid.
343. Ibid.
the sugar beets fields in Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota, the vegetable fields of Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio and fields and factories of Michigan as well as railroad work and mining in some Mid-West states. Now we are here. Gonzales shows that Chicanos have a long history in the Midwest and notes the contributions they made to Midwestern and the greater U.S. society. The brief history presented in this quote demonstrates that Chicanos in the Southwest and Midwest were not separate groups of immigrants but the same types of people, as Chicanos in the Midwest were used for labor in meat-packing factories, sugar-beet fields, factories, and railroad construction. Gonzalez ends his address by saying, “Now we are here.” This final sentence is significant because Gonzalez located Midwestern Chicanos in the history of Mexican American history.

3.1.2. Maintaining Southwestern-Midwestern Networks

Conferences played an important role in communicating the concepts of the Chicano ideology from the Southwest to the Midwest. The Chicanos in the Midwest had a conference not only to communicate with other areas in the country but also to claim a space at their universities and explore issues they felt were important—issues that were occurring both nationally and in their own communities in the Midwest. The Southwest–Midwest network was not only a labor pattern but also found in higher education, where Chicanos from the Southwest would come to institutions in the Midwest, and Chicanos from both locales fought together for the shared cause of greater visibility within the Eurocentric institutions. The Chicano conferences at Midwestern universities—organized by Chicano students—routinely featured national speakers from the Southwest and Colorado. This networking among speakers from the Southwest and Midwest is exemplified by Corky Gonzales’s trip through the Midwest to various campuses to speak. For example, the UM’s 1970 conference featured him as its keynote speaker. Corky Gonzales also

344. Ibid.
came to the UI to speak in 1971 and 1974. In 1971, he was already familiar with Chicano communities in the Midwest. *The Des Moines Register* describes the following scene from the 1971 Iowa Conference: “[T]he conference drew members as far away as Berkeley and Michigan, [and] Gonzales seemed to know at least half of the delegates personally . . . .”¹³⁴⁵ This quote illustrates the shared networks between the Southwest and Midwest as well as how Midwestern conferences drew participants from the Southwest.

Chicanos in the Midwest also attempted to connect to the land like Southwestern Chicanos did by tracing their existence to the Treaty. This Treaty was a symbol of European settlers’ oppression of Southwestern Chicanos through the annexation of Mexican land. The Southwestern Chicanos claimed the land because it used to be part of Mexico. In the opening remarks for the 1973 UI conference, UI professor George Garcia discusses the historical existence of Chicanos in Iowa and emphasizes that it occurred shortly after the signing of The Treaty. In his opening remarks, George Garcia argues that many Chicano scholars and communities in the Southwest believed that Chicanos had only come there during the early 1900s. George Garcia discovered in his research that Chicanos came earlier, as he explains:

> In reality, the first Mexican immigrant to Iowa came in 1856. Whatever brought him up here I don’t know, but he was up in Lyons County, which is a northwestern county in Iowa. . . . This is only eight years after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This is only eleven years after Iowa was born as a state, according to the gringo calendar. So 1856 marks the first Mexican immigrant coming into Iowa; that’s a long time ago. That’s over 100 years ago.³⁴⁶

George Garcia provides a Midwestern historical interpretation that included Atzlán. He connects the Mexicans’ arrival to Iowa within eight years of the signing The Treaty to the same

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³⁴⁶. George Garcia, “Chicano Experiences in the Midwest” (Conference Presentation, “A Positive Direction for the Chicano Movement,” The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, April 14, 1973), Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
oppression Southwestern Chicanos felt by losing the northern part of Mexico to the United States. His statement shows that many Chicanos in the Midwest wanted to be linked to the land of Atzlán to further validate their experiences in the Midwest. Garcia’s comments connecting land in the Midwest to The Treaty suggests that Chicanos in the Midwest had a sense of urgency about legitimizing their experiences in the Midwest and themselves visible to Chicanos in the Southwest; as he points out, the general attitude of the Southwestern Chicano was, “¿Hay Chicanos en Iowa? [There are Chicanos in Iowa?]”

Many Chicanos in the Southwest were not aware of Chicanos in the Midwest and did not consider any to exist outside the Southwest. George Garcia laments, “We also have many Southwestern Chicanos who really do not know what’s going on in the Midwest, who really do not realize there is a sizable Chicano population in the Midwest.”

Because most Southwestern Chicanos were unaware of the Chicano population in the Midwest, the university conferences were a place where Midwestern Chicanos could proclaim their Chicano identity not only to a Chicano audience in the Midwest and the university community such as President Boyd but also to the Southwestern Chicanos who attended their conferences.

Another way Chicanos in the Midwest expressed that they shared similar oppressive experiences with their counterparts in the Southwest was to adopt Southwestern political parties and causes. For example, one major topic found in both the Denver conference and the 1973 Iowa conference was the endorsement of participating in a third-party political system. Chicanos believed that Democrats and Republicans were not different from each other and a Chicano political party “was a reminder to both major parties that Mexicans were determined to make


348. Garcia, “Chicano Experiences in the Midwest.”
democracy and community control a reality in their pursuit for self-determination.”\(^{349}\) Although not every Chicano supported a third political party, La Raza Unida Party (RUP) served as an alternative to the two-party system, and Chicanos approved a resolution Jose Angel Gutiérrez put forth at a MAYO board meeting to create RUP.\(^{350}\) The RUP was developed to “participate in their own institution, one that valued rather than exploited them.”\(^{351}\) RUP began to spread across the country due to the victory of three candidates to the county seats in Cristal, Cotulla, and Carrizo Springs. The multiple RUP candidates’ success led the Chicano community to an “unprecedented political mobilization.”\(^{352}\) RUP chapters were created in the Midwest and showcased the Midwestern Chicano’s desire for an alternative political party.

Between 1968 and 1972, RUP began to develop and spread across the U.S. due to young Chicano activists in universities and colleges that supported a third party as Armando Navarro noted, “From 1972 to about 1979, RUP organizing efforts occurred in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.”\(^{353}\) The emergences of the RUP in the Midwest was also a result that many Chicano students had roots in Texas due to the migrant Southwest-Midwest network “as farmworkers from Crystal City and other parts of Texas traveled to their seasonal work in the Midwest, they were instrumental in propagating the good news of RUP’s elector success in South Texas.”\(^{354}\) The spread of RUP is another example of the network between the Southwest and Midwest. This also extends to the educational sphere.


\(^{350}\) Navarro, La Raza Unida Party, 32.

\(^{351}\) Ibid., 32.

\(^{352}\) Navarro, La Raza Unida Party, 33.

\(^{353}\) Navarro, La Raza Unida Party. 220.

\(^{354}\) Navarro, 221.
because as mentioned above, at the 1973 Iowa conference, Chicano participants and students were encouraged to be politically active in Iowa and Illinois. The conference offered the panel entitled “Chicanos: Political Process,” which featured two chairmen of local RUP party chapters: Richard Ramírez of the Mason City, Iowa, chapter and Angel Moreno, the chair of RUP for Illinois. The panelists describe how the political involvement of Chicanos locally would help them gain more control in the political sphere in the two states. Moreno points out that political change would come from getting Chicanos to vote:

One of our goals as La Raza Unida in the state of Illinois is to get all our people who are eligible and who are citizens to register so they can vote. We want to start making some changes; that is one way we can do it. So, things are changing in Illinois. Our people are waking up and we do not like what we see.

The Chicano community and Chicano students were aware of their second-class status; as Moreno proclaims, “White America does not accept us as equals. We have seen proof of over 400 years of suffering at the mercy of our conquerors because we are conquered, and we are a colonized people.” As Chicanos in the Southwest decided not to passively accept their second-class status in U.S. society, Chicanos in the Midwest also actively and visibly rejected the Anglo American subordination of Chicanos. Moreno declares, “We are no longer going to bow our heads humbly and accept the few little bones they give us every once and awhile to keep us pacified.” As Corky Gonzales did at the Denver conference, Moreno points to education as the catalyst for social change in the Midwest.

355. Angel Moreno, “Chicano: Political Process,” (Conference Presentation, “A Positive Direction for the Chicano Movement,” The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, April 14, 1973), box 1, “Chicano ’73 in Iowa” Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.

356. Ibid.

357. Ibid.
3.2. Midwestern Chicanos Contextualize Chicano Identity

The Midwestern Chicano university conferences were also spaces where Chicanos could consider and contextualize Chicano identity, which was informed by their hybrid identity. Midwestern Chicanos asserted themselves in the narrative of Atzlán and emphasize their experience of oppression as a colonized group. As noted above, Chicanos in the Southwest in general were depicted as being unaware of the Chicano population in the Midwest. However, many national speakers such as Corky Gonzales and Jose Angel Gutierrez were aware that Chicanos in the Midwest faced similar discrimination to that in the Southwest. Many Chicanos in the Southwest acknowledged their Chicano identity through reclaiming Atzlán, but for Chicanos in the Midwest, Atzlán generally has been a state of mind. Using Borderland theory and the concept of hybridity, Atzlán is not in physical proximity to the heartland, but Chicanos there also have a claim to it because of the poor social, economic, educational, and political conditions of Chicanos stemming from the U.S. annexation of Mexico. Mexico’s annexation negatively affected all Chicanos, regardless of geography, which includes the Midwest.

“Atzlán Is Where a Chicano Is”

The keynote speaker at the 1974 UI conference was Jose Angel Gutiérrez, the founder and national chairman of the RUP and the founder of MAYO. As chapter one points out, Gutiérrez saw activism and shared oppression in both Texas and Wisconsin in his youth, and in his address, “The Chicano on the Eve of American Century III,” he states that Chicanos in the Midwest and Southwest shared the same colonized experience as he notes, “Atzlán is not in the Southwest. Atzlán is where a Chicano is. The land in the Southwest that belongs to the people in the Southwest is only a part of the land. Since we were conquered in 1848 we have begun el
Reconquista of this nation.”  Atzlán did not represent only the Southwest because all Chicanos were reclaiming land that was lost to them. Gutiérrez argues that the concept of Atzlán is espoused across the United States:

The settlements in Iowa, Michigan, Pennsylvania, in Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, through this country, there is not one state that does not have a Chicano settlement, is Atzlán. Our constituents and our groups are everywhere that we walk. Because we have earned this right, we have earned this land through our struggles and our skills and our talents we have poured into this land.”

Gutiérrez’s comment about having earned the land views the labor exploitation in the Southwest and Midwest as a shared experience that once again solidifies the idea that Atzlán is a state of consciousness not limited to geographical location. The United States’ use of Mexicans and Mexican Americans as a source of cheap labor—which began with The Treaty—is the common denominator across all Mexican Americans who identify as Chicano. UI professor and panelist George Garcia also dispels the idea that Chicanos were similar to European immigrants, noting:

[Researchers] will probably look at every Midwestern state [and] will find the same kind of things. They [(researchers)] will find that Chicanos were coming out here much earlier than that. Much earlier than many of these other foreign immigrants from Europe that were coming to Iowa.

This assertion that Chicanos were in the Midwest earlier than European settlers is significant because Garcia indicates that Chicanos have rights to the land and dispels the idea that Chicanos in the Midwest will assimilate like European immigrants. George Garcia argues for the Midwestern Chicanos’ right to the land through their labor history, stating, “Most of the railroads

358. José Ángel Gutiérrez, “The Chicano on the Eve of American Century III” (Conference Presentation, “A Positive Direction for the Chicano Movement,” The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA, April 14, 1973), box 1, “Chicano ’73 in Iowa” Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.

359. Ibid.

360. Garcia, “Chicano Experiences in the Midwest.”
in Illinois were built by Chicano labor.”

He connects the Chicanos’ right to claim Midwestern land to their right to claim Atzlán:

> We can see Atzlán in the Southwest, *esa es nuestra tierra* (It’s our land). We were there first. The gringo came over and conquered the area, colonized it, imperialized on it, exploited us, and did everything to us to keep us in an inferior position as conquered people.

George Garcia’s statement ties the Midwestern Chicano experience to the shared experience of being colonized and exploited, regardless whether they lived in the Southwest or the Midwest.

He speaks about diversity within the Chicano community in Iowa as well:

> There are differences between geographical locations in the state . . . . I’m always impressed when I visit Muscatine, West Liberty, Columbus Junction, and I find a lot of what I remember when I lived in Texas of a Tejano type of culture and the Tejano dialect. When I go to Davenport or Des Moines and find more permanent Chicano families who have a different Chicano dialect and a different Chicano culture. There’s a great diversity among Chicano people. I think that historians looking at the Chicano in the Midwest, or in Iowa, have to look at that diversity.

This comment illustrates that although Midwestern Chicanos were interested in being part of the national Chicano identity, they were also exploring their own experience in the Midwest and often shifting between the two identities.

### 3.3. Chapter 3 Summary

Chicano conferences at these four institutions were spaces where Chicano students could come together as a community and express the hybridity of their identity. These conferences featured attendees and speakers from the surrounding Midwestern cities and major figures in the Chicano Movement from the Southwest. Through the Southwestern–Midwestern network in

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361. Ibid.

362. Ibid.

higher-education institutions, Chicano students asserted their Chicano identity and contemplated what it meant to be a Chicano in the Midwest. The conferences offered an opportunity for university officials and communities to understand the struggle of all Chicanos as well as the presence of Chicanos at their institutions. The conferences allowed Chicanos to create greater visibility on campuses.
CHAPTER 4: “THIS SITUATION CANNOT CONTINUE – IT MUST BE REVERSED”

CHICANO STUDENT ACTIVISM IN THE MIDWEST

This chapter discusses the findings for the second question of my dissertation: How did Chicano students’ understanding of Chicano identity play a role in their creation of spaces on their campuses? I argue that their identity influenced their creation of spaces because they simply wanted to preserve and maintain their cultural identity. As a result, Chicano students at these four institutions persisted in their activism over the course of the 1970s to create or begin to create those spaces. By demanding the increased Chicano recruitment and the establishment of Chicano cultural centers and Chicano Studies departments, Chicano students changed the structures of higher education by including non-white students on these campuses where they previously were not. They struggled to have their demands fully met by their university’s administration because as Latin Liberation Front (LLF) student president de Rosales points out, UM’s administration “didn’t understand the Chicano identity.”364 Despite these challenges, I contend that Chicano students were motivated to create these spaces not only for current students but for future generations of Chicano students. De Rosales describes their urgency: “We knew that if we didn't win at that time—that cause—we weren't sure what was going to be the future of Chicano students and Latino students coming to the school. What was the future for our children and our children's children?”365 Chicano students were aware that Chicanos would be the largest minority population one day. UM Chicano students printed in their student newsletter population statistics that predicted that Latinos would be the largest minority by 1990, from which the editors pointed out that “within that, Chicanos will be the largest majority in the Latino


365. Ibid.
community."³⁶⁶ They believed that by being the largest population in the United States one day, they would have more equity in the social, political, and educational realms, exclaiming, “Chicano power! Can be a fact in 1990. All we have to do is prepare the way."³⁶⁷ Chicano students believed in this excerpt and they had to start creating the spaces such as Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers for future Chicano students who would attend these universities. This chapter’s goal is to showcase how Chicanos students continued to push their institutions to meet their demands to preserve their heritage in spite of the barriers universities put forth. Even if the establishment of a Chicano Studies department or cultural center was not completed during the 1970s, these Chicano students laid down the foundation for future Chicano students to create change in their institutions.

University administration at these four institutions gave the appearance that their universities were responsive to Chicano needs. However, their actions showed otherwise as they employed several stall tactics to slow down or completely ignore the Chicano students’ requests. These four universities used tactics such as creating a “task committee,” objecting to the activists’ tone, complaining about feeling threatened by Chicano students, and meeting Chicano students’ requests only partially. The universities also tried to maintain control over the cultural centers and/or render them invisible to the mainstream campus. I contend that despite these barriers, Chicano students displayed agency through activism by bypassing the administrations, continuing to pressure them to meet their demands, and appealing to the student newspapers until their requests were met more completely. Chicano students’ development of Chicano Studies

³⁶⁶ “Editor’s Notes, 1990,” InAmatIxicanome, 2, No.5, (January 1977), no box, no folder, MKCfC432i, La Raza Student Cultural Organization Records, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.
departments increased Chicano recruitment, and the creation of cultural centers was the result of their dedication to their Chicano communities and unwillingness to assimilate.

4.1. Early Challenges in the Establishment of Midwestern Chicano Studies Departments

Chicano Studies departments began to grow across the United States due to the emergence of *El Plan de Santa Barbara*, which endorsed the development of Chicano Studies to effectively educate Chicano students. Chicano Studies departments provided a sense of “legitimacy for many and a place in which Chicano intellectual debates were appreciated.”

They also helped develop Chicano scholars who engaged in intellectual scholarship regarding Chicano issues. However, the establishment of such Departments would not be without challenge for Chicano students at the UM and UW.

4.1.1. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities

In 1970, Chicano students threatened to go on strike at the UM unless university administrators adopted their Chicano Studies department proposal within seventy-two hours. As noted in chapter two, Chicano students confronted the Assistant Vice President of Administration Eidenberg, and Assistant Vice President for Academic Administration Lukermann for over two hours and demanded that they support their proposal within the deadline. However, the two administrators referred them to the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) to have their proposal for a Chicano Studies department approved. Deferring to another department is one tactic universities used to stall or slow progress on the demands of Chicano students. Another tactic was to establish committees to give Chicanos the illusion that the

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university was working on their project; for example, after the CLA approved the establishment of a Chicano Studies department, the university administration began to implement a Chicano Studies Task Committee.\textsuperscript{370} The formation of a committee at first appeared to meet students’ demand of establishing a Chicano Studies department at the UM. But UM’s administrators created these committees and then failed to follow through on their recommendations.

The UM administration employed another tactic of stating that they felt threatened by the Chicano students’ activist tone and/or “pressured” by them, which made them unwilling to work with them; this was showcased in the establishment of the Chicano Studies department. The following June of 1971, the UM began to develop a Chicano Studies department by putting together a Chicano Studies Task Committee. Yet by November 1971, progress had stalled because the Chicano Studies Task Committee members—which included College of Liberal Arts professor Hyman Berman and Anthropology professor Richard Adams—felt pressured by the Chicano students.\textsuperscript{371} Berman, who was in charge of the planning committee, said that Chicano students from the LLF had stormed his office and would not leave until he set a date for a meeting for the committee to consider the proposal.\textsuperscript{372} Berman complied and set a date for a meeting. However, several faculty members and administrators involved in developing the Chicano Studies department proposal as a result of these demands in Berman’s office alleged the Chicano students had attacked them physically.\textsuperscript{373}

\textsuperscript{370} Gonzalez, “The Beginnings of Chicano Studies in Minnesota.”


\textsuperscript{372} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{373} “CLA Committee Requests Halt to Threatening Actions,” University of Minnesota News Release, November 1971, La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
Adams complains in a letter to the editor in the *Minneapolis Tribune* of “continual harassment” by Chicano students in meetings and “threats of physical violence.”

“The tyranny of the minority,” he writes, “clearly operated in this case.”

LLF student President Manuel Guzman stood up for Chicano students and denied the accusations of harassment and violent threats. He states that what the committee called “harassment” was just a demand for delayed justice by the students, noting, “this campus is a peaceful place and you never see any violence . . . So when someone demands justice right away they call it harassment and pressure.”

The Chicano students distrusted the UM administrators’ plan to establish the department because they believed it still saw them as outsiders; as Guzman explains, “The use of that phrase ‘external pressures’ shows that we’re still on the outside . . . [W]e’re the ones who have been under pressure.”

At the same time, the Chicano students’ persistence did create forward movement. Guzman points out that the LLF “more or less lit a fire under Berman’s committee” by refusing to leave Berman’s office until he set a date to consider the proposal. He recognized the value in using protest as a method to get the Chicano Studies department, stating, “we got them to set the meeting before they wanted to . . . We’re going to get a department. The question is when.”

The dispute was finally resolved in 1972 after the dissipation of the first Chicano Studies Task Force when a new task force was assigned with new committee members.

374. Ibid.

375. Ibid.

376. “‘U’ Chicano Students Deny Threat Charges,” University of Minnesota Press Release, November 12, 1971. La Raza, Box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

377. Ibid.

378. Ibid.
The College of Liberal Arts requested that the dean appoint this new committee to draw up another department proposal that the regents would review at their February 1972 meeting. Russell Hamilton, an associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese, headed the new committee. The proposal called for a Chicano Studies department chair, two assistant professors, and eleven courses to be offered to students during the 1972–1973 academic year. The university regents approved the proposal for implementation in September 1972. The stated goal of the new department was to focus on the “study of the history, culture, and language of Americans of Mexican decent.” The proposal laid out five objectives of the department: (1) provide an academic focal point of identification for the Chicanos and their way of life; (2) provide needed course sequences for Chicano students; (3) provide opportunities for non-Chicano students to learn about the cultural and historical heritage of Chicanos; (4) provide a base for inquiry into various aspects of Chicano life and culture; (5) provide a base for further institutional provision for the community.

The establishment of the Chicano Studies department was due to the success of the Chicano students’ continuous protests. It was important to them because it created a space at the UM where Chicano students could feel represented. Professor Alfredo Gonzalez, the acting chair of Chicano Studies department, notes that the department was interested in “reach[ing] the existing Minnesota Chicano community” and teaching the community about Mexican and

379. “Committee Proposes Chicano Department in ’72,” University of Minnesota News Press Release, December 7, 1971. La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

380. “‘U’ Regents Establish Chicano Studies Dept.,” University of Minnesota News Press Release, February 11, 1972. La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

381. Ibid.

382. Ibid.
Mexican American history. Nicolas Costillo a senior in the College of Liberal Arts, concurred, telling the university’s newspaper, the *Minnesota Daily*, that the department had an obligation to the Midwest as the first Chicano Studies department in the region. Alfredo Gonzalez went further in terms of describing the scope of the department’s objectives, saying that he and his colleagues felt that “the university and its departments should not be in an ivory tower” and that the department’s courses would give Chicano students professional skills. Alfredo Gonzalez told the *Minnesota Daily* that the department had been designed to be “instrumental in the solution of social, economic, and educational problems of Chicanos that now exist in the communities of Minnesota as well as the rest of the Midwest.” Indeed, the department had a significant community-engagement component by offering course credit to students involved in school tutorial programs for migrants and a daycare project that served local bilingual and bicultural children. Despite the success of the Chicano Studies department, the UM attempt another tactic to slow its progress by removing faculty.

The *Minnesota Daily* reported in January 1974 that in the third-year of enrollment in the Chicano Studies department, courses was up by thirty percent over the previous year. However, when it came to light that Alfredo Gonzalez had not completed his doctoral degree because he was under the impression that he could teach in the department for a period before completing it, he was fired from his director position. He attributed his firing to the fact that he

383. Kelly, “Chicano Studies Department, 1st in Midwest, Opens at U.”
385. Ibid.
386. Ibid.
387. Ibid.
388. Ibid.
had not completed the degree, but his lack of progress was because of the time he had dedicated to setting up the department.\textsuperscript{389} The \textit{Minnesota Daily} covered the firing of Gonzalez as well as the reactions of the Chicano Studies department’s professors and Chicano students. The newspaper quoted Alfredo Gonzalez’s replacement as department chair, Dr. Manuel Guerrero, an existing faculty member, as saying that the firing showed “a real lack of real commitment to the Chicano students on the part of some university administrators.”\textsuperscript{390} Student James Duarte called the firing “an attack on the whole department.”\textsuperscript{391} He attributed the firing of Gonzalez to the department’s budget, which was the smallest in the College of Liberal Arts.\textsuperscript{392} Alfredo Gonzalez’s firing due to not having his doctoral degree and despite his significant experience working with Chicano students was notable because it indicated that the UM was attempting to make the Chicano Studies department conform to the Eurocentric structures of academia by enforcing the idea that a legitimate scholar should have a doctoral degree.

Chicano students unified and created a petition for the UM administrators not to fire Alfredo Gonzalez. They stated that the administration had not considered the “strength of his leadership, excellent teaching, and valuable involvement throughout the state.”\textsuperscript{393} To lose Alfredo Gonzalez was to lose a professor at a time when they needed more faculty to grow the program. The university noticed the students’ outrage not only from the petition they organized but also by the local media’s coverage of it. These forms of protest were successful in that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{389} Linda Sanderson, “Chicano Studies Head Without Ph.D Loses Job, ‘Attack on the Whole Department’ Alleged,” n.d. La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
\item \textsuperscript{390} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{391} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{392} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{393} Latin Liberation Front, “Petition”, 1976, La Raza, box 1, Events and Publications folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
\end{itemize}
Alfredo Gonzalez was retained; as noted in a memo from President C. Peter McGrath to Guerrero, while they could not reverse the termination, they would “retain him in the office of student affairs.”

Chicano students at the UM at first attempted to work within the institution in 1971 by going through the proper channels in the UM’s administration. But by the mid-1970s, the UM Chicano student population was decreasing, even though Chicanos had become the largest minority ethnic group in Minnesota. Administrators either refused or ignored Chicano students’ request for a meeting to discuss Chicano recruitment and retention issues. By 1976, Chicano students threatened to go outside the university to continue to build the Chicanos Studies department. The Chicano Student Coalition sent a memo to President McGrath, writing:

If the University of Minnesota is truly committed to having Chicano studies serve as a model for the Midwest, we request your immediate consideration. We have been patient since the inception of Chicano studies in 1972, we are being held accountable without full administrative support. Therefore, we are requesting your response within a week (May 26, 1976) or we will be forced to pursue other pressures such as presenting our grievances . . .

The memo lists nineteen organizations that would support the students’ protest if the university did not respond. However, they note that the university kept “stonewalling” the Chicano Studies department’s progress. These appeasing tactics were so common that even Chicano students were aware of the placatory strategies the university had used previously—as they call for a task force for Chicano concerns, they note that “[a] task force would indicate support on the part of the university if even a ‘placating gesture.’” This showcases how Chicano students still felt that

394. Peter McGrath, “Memo to Manuel Guerrero,” La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

395. Chicano Student Coalition, “Memo to President McGrath,” La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.

a “placating gesture” would be a step toward getting what they wanted, even if it were a small one.

Additionally, Chicano students were aware of the UM administrations’ tactics of portraying Chicano students as irrational, as student Paul Carrizales reports in the article “U Officials Unresponsive to Chicano Needs”:

You try going through the system and they give you the runaround. They don’t answer your phone calls, they don’t put on the agenda—they don’t even have an agenda. And the anger builds and builds until finally you’re forced into a confrontation, then they say, ‘We knew it all along. You’re just not rational.’

This alludes to the very first task force on a Chicano Studies department in 1971, when faculty members complained that Chicano students were impeding their ability to work because of the pressure they put on them. Carrizales’s quote reveals that the UM administrators returned to this tactic once again to attempt to invalidate the Chicano students’ concerns.

The Chicano students bypassed the UM by going to the media once again by telling the Minnesota Daily that Chicano students were “outraged” at the disproportionally low Chicano enrollment at the university that had decreased by sixty-one percent from 1969 to 1976 while black enrollment had increased by thirty-three percent and Asian Americans enrollment by twenty-three percent. After the Chicano students went to the media with their concerns, and after they sent the letter to the administration demanding that it be cognizant of their needs, the UM’s administrators established a 16-member task force on Chicanos despite cutbacks in


funding at the time to “meet the needs of the Chicano-Latino community.” The UM’s move to create a task force again speaks to the UM officials’ desire to placate the Chicano students to get them to stop making demands rather than effect meaningful changes at the UM.

The task force submitted a report of recommendations in 1977, which revealed the extent to which the UM was not meeting the needs of its Chicano students. It again outlined the major argument of chapter two, basing its demands and/or recommendations on the economic contributions of Chicanos in the Midwest and the considerable Midwestern Chicano population compared with the tiny UM student population. The task force’s report emphasized both the Chicanos’ economic contribution as well as their historical presence in the Minnesota, stating, “Although the Mexican-origin population of Minnesota is associated in popular opinion with recently settled out migrant agricultural workers, in fact it is a much older and diverse in origin and character than is generally assumed.” This passage indicates that even by 1977, Chicano students and faculty still were educating the administrators about how Chicanos had existed in the Midwest for a long time, just as a previous task force did in the early 1970s. The report explains how Chicanos’ Midwestern growth was based on employment:

[T]he first migrants of 5,000 grew to 50,000 through the years of 1950–1975. They came to search for better life. The increase resulted in a great measure from both private and public recruitment labor for agricultural sector of the economy, but other significant factors were the attractiveness of Minnesota economy in general, which has resulted in the immigration of many Mexican-origin persons from the surrounding Midwest states and the high demographic growth rate characteristic of the Latino population.


The rapid growth of the Midwestern Chicano population emphasized to UM administrators that it was more important than ever to pay attention to the needs of Chicanos in higher education. The report also points out that the educational inequities for Chicano youth resulted in them being prepared only for labor in unskilled or semiskilled types of employment:

> It is increasingly a young and urban population whose educational level is below state and national norms. It is employed either in a factor or in a service industry and has a very high level of unemployment (over 30 percent).402

The report points to Southwest–Midwest networking as the reason why Chicanos came to the Midwest. It outlines the educational struggles the Chicano population endured in Minnesota’s K–20 educational system as a justification for meeting the needs of this population. During the late 1970s, Chicano students’ K–20 educational attainment was below academic level compared with other groups in Minnesota, and the report argues that the lack of educational opportunity, access, and resources negatively impacted Chicanos’ current and future employment.

The report also discusses the large state population of Chicanos compared with the low Chicano student enrollment at the UM:

> Chicanos are now the largest minority groups in the state of Minnesota and are especially concerned about the recent trend and substance of various affirmative action programs that impact on the social, economic and educational status of the Hispanic population of Minnesota. There is mounting evidence that despite an overall trend of improvement in the status of most minority groups since the late 1960s, the status of the Hispanic population in Minnesota has not kept pace, has not advanced, but has deteriorated. This situation cannot continue, it must be reversed, and there must be a change in direction.403

The report notes that Chicanos were an oppressed group which simply wanted to have the same progress other marginalized and oppressed groups in U.S. society enjoyed. The Mexican-origin population was in search of a place in both Minnesota and the American community. They

402. Ibid.

403. Ibid., 12.
sought to enjoy the same rights, privileges, advantages, benefits, and opportunities other
Minnesotans and Americans had. It also stresses that the UM was clearly behind on meeting the
needs of Chicanos and that Chicano student and faculty members were committed to continue to
fight for Chicanos recognition by the university.

Chicanos students, who were a part of the task committee, felt that the UM was not
giving them the opportunity to those educational rights and They put the responsibility back on
the UM by point to the root of the decline of Chicano population as the university’s “failure of
recruitment, of admissions, and of retention of students.” 404 Although they point out the failures
of the UM, they also express encouragement from their belief in the university system:

We have to believe that the University of Minnesota is interested in improving the
recruitment and retention of students, the appointment of academic and civil service
personnel and the education of all citizens of Minnesota in their knowledge of the present
Chicano community and its historical and cultural past. 405

The Chicano students’ maintaining hope in the university system was because of their dedication
to the betterment of their community and was the reason why they continued to endure resistance
from institutions for educational change. The report also demonstrates the value they placed on
education. Their value of education and commitment to their community is seen as the 1970s
ended and the 1980s began because Chicanos mobilized once again protested the UM’s
unresponsiveness to their needs on campus.

In 1980, Chicanos met with UM officials to demand changes once again. They were
“blasting the university with cries of racism for administration’s handling of Chicano
recruitment, retention, housing, and other concerns” because by 1980, the university still had not

404. Ibid., 14.
405. Ibid., 17.
implemented the recommendations outlined in the 1977 report.\textsuperscript{406} In the \textit{Minnesota Daily} article “Chicanos Meet with U to Demand Changes,” Alfredo Gonzalez notes, “The university appointed a Chicano task force to make recommendations in 1976–1977,” but the university ignored the recommendations; as he further expounds, “We, Chicanos worked hard on reports, but no one followed the advice.”\textsuperscript{407} Throughout the 1980s, the UM and Chicano students would continue this pattern that began in the 1970s in which the UM made slow progress and the Chicano students kept organizing until there was forward movement on their issues.

\textbf{4.1.2. The University of Wisconsin-Madison}

Like its counterpart in Minnesota, the Chicano Studies department at the UW was initially a demand of student protesters. Two years after the UM established its department, Chicano students at the UW picketed Morrill Hall to demand the establishment of their own. Administrators responded in 1974 by creating what it termed a “Chicano Advisory Committee” to help meet the needs of the Chicano students.\textsuperscript{408} The Chicano Advisory Committee appeared to be another placatory measure as it made no commitment to establish a Chicano Studies department. Chicano student protests continued as they still saw no movement from administration on their demands.

In April of 1975, Salas, the Chicano student activist, served on the Chicano Advisory Committee and applied for a travel voucher to fund a trip to San Antonio, Texas so he could observe their Chicano Studies department to gather information for a proposal to build a similar department in Wisconsin-Madison.

\begin{flushright}
407. Perrusquia, “Chicanos meet with U to demand Changes.”
\end{flushright}
program at UW. According to Salas, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts David Cronon had made a commitment to the committee to approve a number of these vouchers so members could gather information. Dr. Prospero Saiz, a Spanish professor who served as the chair of the committee, concurred with Salas’s account. However, Cronon refused to sign the voucher, claiming he had never made such a promise. At that point, members of the Chicano student organization LRU began to picket the administration building. They described Cronon’s refusal to sign the document as evidence that the university officials did not take their demands seriously. LRU also sent a letter before the protest chastising the university’s lack of commitment and stalling the process of establishing a Chicano Studies department even though they had used the proper channels to create one, writing:

After working for years through the University’s concept of a multi-cultural program, and exhausting every channel of the University structure to solve the needs of the Chicanos within the UW-Madison, we have experienced nothing but rhetoric, delays, and interference. It has now been verified that the University has no attention of making any real commitment to satisfy those needs.

This passage illustrates how long Chicanos had continued to challenge the university in the face of its stall tactics and the multiple ways they had attempted to get the Chicano Studies department established. In this letter, they demanded that upper-level administrators such as Cronon meet with LRU to negotiate for a department. Chicano students felt that protesting visibly was a last resort, writing that they were “left with no alternative, but [we]re forced by the

409. Arnold, “La Raza Charges.”
410. Ibid.
411. Ibid.
412. Ibid.
414. Ibid.
University to take this step.”  When the university officials continued to rebuff them, they sought support from other sources.

For example, Senior Vice President for Budget Planning and Analysis Donald E. Percy expressed his support for Chicano students in the Daily Cardinal, noting that they had seen the university “move ahead on [programs for] Blacks and Native Americans and they are saying ‘What about us?’ Clearly we have an obligation in this area.” He called on the university to provide funds. Additionally, the mayor of Madison, Paul Soglin, endorsed a Chicano Studies department in a letter to Dean Cronon dated April 11, 1975:

> The pool [from] which we can hire, is only as broad as what the University produces . . . . Provision must be made to break down the barrier, which the White community has established. Assimilation is not the answer. The barriers can only be broken down, particularly in terms of the Latino community, when a curriculum is devised which offers the opportunity to deal with [the] social and historical force between two cultures.  

At first, these outside appeals seemed promising; despite the lack of funding for traveling to other Chicano Studies departments, in May 1975, members of LRU set up a meeting and brought a proposal for a Chicano Studies department to Dean Cronon, Dean of Students Paul Ginsberg, Chancellor Irving Shain, Assistant Vice Chancellor Joe Curry, and Chancellor Edwin Young. The proposal outlined the need for the department and stated that it should include two tenured professors, two assistant professors, one lecturer, three teaching assistants, and one secretary.

The May 1975 meeting was disappointing; administrators rejected the proposal, claiming further study into how a Chicano Studies department would fit into the university’s overarching goals was needed. They claimed that students had attempted to bypass proper channels. Daniel

415. Ibid.


417. Ibid.
Hernandez, a member of LRU who had been present at the meeting, told the student newspaper, “They tried to just tell us that a Chicano is like any other Latino and we should set up a department that encompasses all Latinos.” Yet, Chicano students wanted a Chicano Studies department that represented their unique cultural heritage. The UW officials still did not take the proposal seriously, so Chicano students’ protests continued at Morrill Hall into the summer months.

As the protests continued, the UW administration found other ways to halt student activism by unevenly applying certain policies among student groups. In June 1975, Salas and another activist, Pedro Garcia, drew an Aztec Calendar with indigenous imagery on the sidewalk and were arrested on criminal charges of “unlawfully and intentionally caus[ing] damage to property of the University of Wisconsin without Consent,” which carried a six month-jail sentence and $200 fine. According to the university’s policy, criminal charges would have called for their immediate expulsion. But LRU accused the UW of racial discrimination, pointing out that other student organizations had painted on sidewalks to advertise and art students had painted a mural on the side of a building without permission or penalty. The district attorney refused to press charges. “I guess they are technically guilty,” he told the reporter, “but I don’t know what the university is so uptight about. Actually, the calendar looked pretty artistic.” The district attorney’s refusal to press charges and description of UW officials

419. Ibid.
421. Selk, “University Officials Draw Lines.”
422. Ibid.
“uptight” indicates that the UW was overacting in their attempt to punish these Chicano students. However, the students were not intimidated and continued to make demands.

In June 1975, UW officials refused to meet with members of LRU to continue discussions about a Chicano Studies department. Salas reported the negative experiences Chicano students were having with the UW administration to the Madison newspaper, the *Capitol Times*, criticizing them by noting that “they act like they’re doing us a favor by sitting down and talking to us, and they’re supposed to be public servants.” 423 Once again, the Chicano students bypassed UW officials when LRU contacted the U.S. Department of Justice conciliation specialists for help resolving the dispute, and representatives from the department met with Chicanos across Wisconsin in an effort to comply. 424 The Chicano students also went to the Wisconsin State Senate to petition for money to fund the Chicano Studies department, which established a budget of $50,000 for one in 1975. Chicano students took it upon themselves to find this funding because as Salas notes, the UW had difficulty working with the state legislature:

[L]ook at what happened with their budget . . . [T]hey didn’t get anything out of the senate. They cry autonomy, yet they are unable to have decent communications with senators or community groups. They will destroy the university themselves if that is not changed. 425

This quote refers to that in the same month, the UW learned it stood to lose $11 million in federal funds because it had declined affirmative-action proposals from the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Salas describes this as “the tip of the iceberg” and accused


424. Ibid.

425. Ibid.
the university of displays of “outright racism.” The Department of Justice was unable to broker an agreement between members of the LRU and UW. As June drew to a close, LRU began to suggest that protests might turn violent. Pedro Garcia told another local newspaper, the *Badger Herald*, that the organization might need to “escalate our activities in order to be heard.” Yet these threats never materialized because the Chicano students continued to use peaceful ways of demonstration and gave the university the benefit of the doubt. For example, Chancellor Edwin Young verbally told the students there would be a committee to establish the Chicano Studies department, and they continued to wait for that committee to materialize.

By August 1975, Chicano students stopped protesting because Young promised to establish a committee to create a department by mid-September. Yet he had not created it when classes began the fall 1975 term when the *Daily Cardinal* reported on the omission. In the article, David Saldana, vice president of LRU, laments, “What happened is basically what always happens. The White man made us a promise and they broke it.” According to Saiz, Young “refused to put anything in writing because he was ‘a man of his word’—and then denied he had promised to form the committee by that date.” The Joint Finance Committee of the state legislature had given the university $50,000 dollars—far from enough to set up a department, but still a considerable sum to be used for a Chicano Studies department. Young proposed to use the money to hire a single faculty member to teach Chicano Studies courses.

426. Ibid.
429. Ibid.
430. Ibid.
Saiz criticized Young’s proposal in the student newspaper, noting, “if the University really wanted to do something [to serve Chicano students], they would have followed up on our efforts.”431 As the students did, Saiz suggests that protest might turn violent: “People are getting restless . . . . We’re willing to play the committee game to show that the so-called channels are not for us. We’ll realize [when] we’ll have to take further actions.”432 Saldana adds that “the picket line was only a start; we realize we can’t rely on the White man’s consciousness.”433 However, Chicano students continued to wait in hopes that the university would finally meet their demand.

By October 1975, the Chicano students had been protesting for five months and the Justice Department was involved, but there was still no committee and no resolution.434 The newspapers again reported that students were threatening to take things to the next level of protest. Speaking to the local Badger Herald, Chicano student leaders called the cessation of picketing in August a “goodwill gesture”—one the administration ultimately ignored.435 Saiz points out at that the university had created a Women’s Studies department because it “is a White middle-class program” but remained unwilling to fund Chicano studies because Chicanos were seen as second-class citizens.436 He observes, “This not a warning, but we cannot wait for the conscious of the White man to be stirred . . . . [I]t’s tough to keep a lid on things. We have a lot

431. Ibid.
432. Ibid.
433. Ibid.
434. It is unclear by the documents in the archives if Chicano students picketed the administration buildings throughout these five months, but they did continue to protest through the newspaper articles profiling their concerns with the UW administrators on the issue of the Chicano Studies department.
436. Ibid.
of frustrated individuals who want to do something.”\footnote{Ibid.} However, undergraduate student Pedro Garcia is more explicit: “[I]f people couldn’t respond to a peaceful type of demonstration, there’s a number of ways to awaken people.”\footnote{Sam Freeman, “Chicanos Accuse UW of Inaction,” \textit{Daily Cardinal Editorial}, October 5, 1975.} Yet the agency students continued to show was through being a unified group. Saiz credits picketing with raising Chicano consciousness: “The struggle has brought us closer together and our organization is pretty formidable now. La Raza has made valuable contacts.”\footnote{Ibid.} The continual persistence and pressure by the Chicano students did pay off, albeit in a small way, when the administration formed a Chicano Studies Department Committee after the students again bypassed the UW and focused on getting their activism more visible in the media.

The Chicano students circumvented the administration by going to the local newspaper with a \textit{Daily Cardinal} editorial in which they accuse Young of delaying funds to the UW that had been listed in the state’s budget for a Chicano Studies committee. The \textit{Daily Cardinal} editorial condemns Young’s slow action on the issue:

If Young is an example of the White man’s consciousness, the Chicanos’ doubts are well-grounded. Not only does Young lie about his efforts to meet the needs of Chicano students, he himself admits that he doesn’t understand the difference between a Chicano and a Latino. He’s living proof that a Chicano Studies Department is needed not only Chicanos but by Whites.\footnote{“Need Chicano Studies,” \textit{Daily Cardinal Editorial}, October 7, 1975.}

Three days after the editorial was published, the UW announced that Young had formed the committee and that Saiz and Pedro Garcia were serving on it.\footnote{“UW News Release: Chicano Studies Committee Named,” University of Wisconsin, Madison, October 10, 1975, box 1, Chicano Studies Origins folder, coll. 2006/124, Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison University Archives.} This showcases how Chicano
students would not rest on their laurels if the UW was not responding to their requests. Chicano students achieved small movements forward by putting direct pressure on administrators.

Chicano students did not protest for six more years, and the Chicanos Studies department still had not come to fruition. By 1980, Chicano students and faculty supporters became visible again by calling for the department.⁴⁴² The February 1982 *Daily Cardinal* headline “University Still Ignores Chicano Students” observes the university’s continual inaction on the establishment of Chicano Studies department. The article quotes education professor Dr. Richard Ruiz as saying, the “[u]niversity’s main interest in Chicanos is ‘legal.’”⁴⁴³ He accuses officials of implementing affirmative-action policies only to avoid censure by the federal government.⁴⁴⁴ A graduate-student protester named Dalia Rodriguez agreed, saying, “The University has no sincere interest in the Chicano culture.”⁴⁴⁵ Ruiz describes academia as a Eurocentric system and argues that the UW saw research by minorities as “political and indoctrinating, not academic” and therefore refused to support it.⁴⁴⁶ He notes that most of the school’s professors were white men and that white men determined the admission policies, use of funds, and content areas its research program would support. “This one-sided control . . . reinforces inaccurate images of Chicanos,” Rodriguez accuses.⁴⁴⁷

By 1982, the Chicano Studies committee that was supposed to have met in 1974 to recommend the Chicanos Studies department to the UW still had not met. Salas notes the history

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⁴⁴³ Puig, “University Still Ignores Chicano Students.”

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.
of the struggle to establish a Chicano Studies department: “The University has not responded to our situation, to our needs. I saw that in 1974, and I see it in 1982.” Madison newspapers had similar headlines in 1982 to those in the 1970s, such as “Chicano Studies Department for UW” and “University Still Ignores Chicano Students,” which illustrates the lack of response by the university. But the Chicanos’ persistence in the 1970s planted the seeds which grew into the UW eventually offering a Chicana/o/Latina/o Studies certificate program in 1992, and it offers a minor in Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies today. Much like the UM and UW administration’s resistance to establishment of a Chicano Studies department, Chicano students across the four institutions also had issues with getting more aid to recruit Chicano students, and the administration attempted to pacify them with part-time recruiters.

4.2. Recruitment Struggles

4.2.1. The University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign and University of Iowa

The U of I and UI did not establish any sort of Chicano Studies academic credential until well after the UM and UW did. For these two schools, Chicano student activism in the 1970s focused on recruitment and the development of cultural centers. In particular, Latino students at the U of I called for increased recruitment of Latino students, pointing out that among the university’s 33,000 students, only sixty-six were Latino. University officials made a verbal commitment to bring in an advisor to address Latino recruitment, but student Ruben Cruz expressed skepticism at this response, saying, “[From a bird’s-eye view,] it appears that the

448. Ibid.


University is conscious of the needs of our students, but if we look deeper we have noticed that this is not the case.\textsuperscript{451} Benjamin Reyes, president of the Urban Hispanic Organization (UHO), said that the U of I officials’ response to their demands of more recruitment suggested that the university expected the students to spearhead the efforts.\textsuperscript{452}

As noted in chapter two, recruitment was a major demand for Latino students at the U of I because they felt that if they had larger numbers on campus, they could get more services. By the time that the UHO presented demands to administration in 1973, they had already been quietly demanding more recruitment. For example, Rudy Garcia, a UHO member, stated that Chancellor J.W. Peltason told the students he would write a letter to the EOP head Clarence Shelley to ensure that the EOP was aware of the needs of Latinos, including their desire for more representation on campus. However, Latino students were unsure of the support they would get from the U of I, as Ben Reyes commented that “the university assured them of a response to similar demands a year ago and Latin students are still waiting.”\textsuperscript{453} Reyes’s assessment was accurate because in the article “Peltason to Respond to Latins’ Demands,” Peltason is dismissive. He responds, “There is a considerable number of non-black students in EOP.”\textsuperscript{454} Yet ninety percent of the EOP student population was black while six percent was Latino, but Peltason deflected, stating that the EOP “is not considered a recruiting organization. Their job is to be supportive once the students are here.”\textsuperscript{455} Despite Peltason’s dismissal, Latino students continued

\textsuperscript{451} Ruben Cruz, “The Latinos.” Record Series 41/64/40, La Casa Cultural Latina, Box 1, Folder: “Articles & Brochures on Latinos,” UIUC Library University Archives, University of Illinois.

\textsuperscript{452} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{453} Wolf, “Latin Students Present Demands.”

\textsuperscript{454} Jackie Wolf, “Peltason to Respond to Latins’ Demands.”

\textsuperscript{455} Ibid.
to persist; as noted in the same issue of the *Daily Illini* in the article “Latins Want New Meeting,” the UHO wanted a new meeting to continue to discuss the students’ demands, and it invited some U of I’s officials. President John E. Corbally and Peltason responded in a joint letter that they could not make the meeting. Their failure to attend was due to their disliking how the Chicano students made their demands. They wrote in a response letter to the UHO that “[t]he very real problem to which your ’demands’ speak cannot be solved by meetings nor by exchanges of ‘demands’ and ‘responses to demands.’” In response to the administration’s unwillingness to meet with them, Latinos students throughout Illinois held a rally to support their demands. They showed no signs of slowing down their protests.

During the 1973–74 academic year, the U of I’s officials placated the Latino students by hiring part-time recruiters with the promise that they would hire a full-time recruiter later. By 1975, Latino students challenged the administration to fully meet their demands with a full-time recruiter focused on Latino recruitment. The Latina Colectiva Latina (LCL), formerly the UHO, sent a letter to Jane W. Loeb, the university’s director of Admissions and Records, on February 6, 1975 to urge the Office of Recruitment to improve the enrollments of Latino students. The letter recounts the struggle Latinos had encountered working with Loeb:

Over the past two years concerned Latino students have arranged various meetings with you, [the] director of O.A.R. [Office of Admissions and Records] to present and discuss possible means, which will facilitate Latino student recruitment. After several meetings O.A.R. instituted a half-time Latino recruiter position in the winter of 1973. At the same time, you verbally expressed priority would be given toward increasing Latino input into the admission process. [You suggested this would culminate in the hiring of] a full-time Latino Admissions Officer . . . . [T]he present situation in O.A.R. [is] inconsistent with

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456. The officials invited to meeting were President John E. Corbally, Peltason, Associate Chancellor for Affirmative Action Miriam Sheldon, EOP head Clarence Shelley, and the board of trustees.


458. Ibid.
the previously set priorities and unless commitments previously made are carried out in terms of a full-time Latino Admissions Officer, the university cannot espouse concern for increasing the Latino enrollment on campus.\textsuperscript{459}

LCL decried the hypocrisy of Loeb’s office. By April 1975, its members held a demonstration to show their disenchantment “concerning the decisions of Loeb and Peltason, regarding both the lack of the full-time Latino staff members and the termination of the half-time positions.”\textsuperscript{460}

Twenty-five Latino students picketed the administration building, demanding a full-time Latino recruiter to strengthen the work of the part-time one. They claimed a full-time recruiter was needed to go into high schools and enable the half-time recruiter to do administrative duties. They also asked that the full-time recruiter have “direct accessibility” to Loeb because it “would give the recruiters more influence, making them better able to help Latinos students.”\textsuperscript{461} The protesters eventually went to Loeb’s office, but she was not there. However, Loeb was aware that the demonstration occurred and responded they were in the process of finding a recruiter; however, she stated that there was “no need for recruiters to act independently through direct accessibility to her.”\textsuperscript{462} Due to the inaccessibility of Loeb, Latino students continued to hold demonstrations in support of hiring Latino recruiters to “the benefit of the Latino population on campus and in the State of Illinois.”\textsuperscript{463} It is unclear which actions Loeb took next, but she appeared to agree to hire a full-time Latino recruiter. Nonetheless Latino students still believed that Loeb was not seriously listening to them and was only placating them instead. Because of

\textsuperscript{459} La Colectiva Latina, “Correspondence to Jane W. Loeb, Director of Office of Admissions,” April 21, 1975, Record Series 41/2/31, Dean of Men Administrative Subject File, box 9, Folder: “Latinos, 1942–79,” UIUC Library University Archives, University of Illinois.


\textsuperscript{462} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{463} La Latina Colectiva, “The Need for Latino Recruiters.”
this, they refused to have Latinos participate in the search for a full-time recruiter, as a letter to Loeb from LCL dated April 21, 1975, states:

[Latino students] will not allow any member to sit in on the search committee for the Latino recruiter. To do so would be defeating our purposes set forth in our last meeting. While you have seemingly conceded to our demands of having a full-time Latino recruiter, you have not taken into consideration the necessary criteria for an effective recruiter.\(^464\)

The students appeared not to have a full say in how the proposed recruiter would be selected. Their refusal to continue to work with Loeb on this issue showcases the disrespect they felt by Loeb as well as her disregard for their experiences and needs on campus. The ineffective recruitment of Latinos remained in 1978, as revealed by the resignation of Richard Diaz, assistant to Loeb, in July of that year.\(^465\)

Diaz revealed his reasons for leaving in letter to Loeb and Assistant Director Walter H. Washington: “The justifications for this decision have convinced me that this position has become ineffective under present conditions and that my time and efforts can best be utilized elsewhere.”\(^466\) At first, Diaz’s goal for the position was to help recruit Latino students, considering the large Latino population in Illinois compared with the paltry Latino student population at the U of I. However, he spent a large portion of his time working with general admissions, which did not give him sufficient time to do so. While general admissions were part of his job description, he wanted to focus on more Latino recruitment when he became “aware of

\(^{464}\) La Colectiva Latina, “Correspondence to Jane W. Loeb, Director of Office of Admissions.”

\(^{465}\) From the documents from the archives it is unclear when Mr. Diaz was hired. The documents I found indicated he served as the Assistant Director of the Office of Admissions and Records.

the truly poor Latino representation at this campus." His displeasure about the lack of representation of Latinos is obvious from his exacting words:

Considering the embarrassingly low numbers attending the UIUC, one would think administration would make an active effort to fortify their Latino articulation staff to meet the challenge of attracting qualified Latinos to this campus. But this is not the case.

His split focus on general and Latino recruitment made it difficult for him to effectively recruit Latino students: “A reduction of the time, attention, energy, and resources of the sole Latino recruiter in Urbana–Champaign is a step backwards along the path of equal opportunity.”

Diaz’s underlining of the word “sole” connects with his argument about the lack of commitment to Latino recruitment because as he astutely recognizes, he indicates that he was the only Latino focused on Latino recruitment. Further, he only worked half the time on Latino recruitment. This signifies that the U of I administration and recruitment professionals either thought they were doing enough to recruit Latino students, or they were apathetic about that goal.

The U of I may have thought it was recruiting efficiently based on the documented student applicants. But Diaz notes the discrepancies in how the U of I counted recruited students:

[S]uch a weak Latino recruitment effort is not so easily identified because of the way the data system is programmed . . . . Since the commuter system is not designed to identify the number of Latino and black admits via EOP, it will erroneously show that the total EOP figures are consistent. For fall ’78 term only 69 Latinos have been admitted even though the data will show that we have successfully filled the EOP spaces. It is not a struggle or quarrel over black and Latino applications—it is merely indicating that the recruitment system has not been developed so that Latinos can be assured a steady stream of applications, and there is no sign that this will happen due to the restrictions placed on my position.

467. Ibid.
468. Ibid.
469. Ibid.
470. Ibid.
He argues that the system recorded and displayed admitted students but did not effectively document how many Latinos were recruited and admitted. If the system did not correctly count the Latino recruitments and/or counted more than were actually enrolled, this affected Latino programming. Diaz also argues that a small Latino population on campus affected the services and spaces for Latinos students:

Latino programming because a decreasing or low enrollment means few students to participate in activities which means few substantiated program proposals which, in turn means greater cuts in Latino budgeting. A reduction or stagnation in the appropriation of these funds completely negates a major recruitment tool for attracting Latinos to the urban campaign—a viable and respectable Latino program.  

Diaz’s acknowledgment that the U of I had a “respectable Latino program” demonstrates the work Latino students had put in to make the program possible. But the ineffective recruitment of Latino students on campus was a disservice to all the protesting these Latinos had done in the early 1970s through 1978 when Diaz resigned. At the end of his letter, Diaz cautions that if the U of I continued on its path, Latino recruitment would be “nothing more than a charade.”

This lack of recruitment and misreported student demographics was also an issue Chicanos felt at the UM. Before the establishment of the Taskforce for Chicano Concerns, the Chicano Student Coalition members staged a demonstration against the university administration for its lack of commitment to Chicano students. The July 1976 demonstration was a peaceful attempt to communicate their grievances against the UM administration. Students claimed that by not actively “recruiting Chicanos and by underrepresenting their numbers, the administration limits the Chicano participation in general programs and funds.”

471. Ibid.

472. Ibid.

473. Rogelio Hernandez, “Chicano Students Press University Administration for Fair Deal,” *InAmatlInXicanome* 1, no. 9, (August 1976), no box, no folder, # MKCfC432i, La Raza Student Cultural Organization Records, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Anderson Library, University of Minnesota
Carrizales points that low Chicano participation and recruitment created more isolation for Chicano students, arguing, “Whether by omission or on purpose, this form of racism results in poor supportive services and poor environmental surroundings for Chicanos.”

Chicano students demanded that the UM administration increase budgetary allowances to strengthen the Chicano Studies department in proportion with other departments.

At the U of I, Diaz continued to showcase his strong commitment to Latinos students as well, which led him to send his resignation letter to Arthur R. Velasquez, a member of the U of I board of trustees. Velasquez in turn wrote a letter to William P. Gerberding, chancellor at the U of I, to voice his concern: “I feel this resignation should not be taking lightly as it reflects the frustration which we all feel, especially when problems are pointed out administrators and we seem to digress rather than make the progress which we can easily obtain.”

Diaz’s decision to go above the U of I administration to its board of trustees showcases how Latinos had to go above and beyond their duties to get the attention of the university. After Gerberding received the letter, Dean Clarence Shelly contacted Loeb to look into Latino demographics and recruitment strategies.

In a letter to Shelly, Loeb states that 121 students with Spanish surnames were recruited for that year. She notes that, “I am pleased that Spanish surname enrollment had not declined,” but from 1977 to 1978, there was not a substantial increase of Latino students enrolled. In 1977,

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475. Ibid.

Spanish-surnamed students enrolled were 232, and in 1978, there were 237.\textsuperscript{477} Loeb attempts to soften this small Latino student growth by making sure Shelly knew the data was an underestimate. Additionally, Loeb counting Spanish surnames is an inaccurate representation of Latino student population. For example, Dinicio Valdés argued that misrepresenting Latino enrollment by counting Spanish surnames is a university’s way of giving the “appearance” of enrollment growth progress. He maintains that the UM’s admission offices devised a way to showcase a growth of Chicano population by counting Spanish surnamed or “Hispanic students instead of Chicanos.”\textsuperscript{478}

Loeb also lists reasons for the low recruitment such as “the Latino recruiter position was vacant last fall” and “we experienced personnel difficulties with our recruiting effort.”\textsuperscript{479} She references that she rehired someone who had previously worked in Latino recruitment for her and who was “successful” at recruiting Latinos.\textsuperscript{480} This is significant because rather than listen to the Latino students and/or Latino recruiter, she put the blame on the Latino recruiter for not doing his job effectively. She hired someone she knew was successful at getting the numbers she needed to appease the university’s administrators by identifying students’ Spanish surnames rather than how they identified in order to stop Latino students and/or the board of trustees’ complaints about the lack of substantial Latino recruitment. Since 1972, Latino students requested a full-time Latino recruiter but were only given a part-time recruiter plus a verbal promise that a full-time one would eventually follow. By the 1974–75 academic year, Latino


\textsuperscript{478} Valdés, 200.

\textsuperscript{479} Loeb, “Spanish Surname Undergraduate Applications, Admits, and Enrolled for Fall 1978.”

\textsuperscript{480} Ibid.
students were organizing and protesting across Illinois for a full-time Latino recruiter, but Loeb was unresponsive to their requests then and remained indifferent in 1978.

4.3. Control over Cultural Centers

One of the main issues Chicano students encountered with their cultural centers was keeping them spaces where Chicanos still felt like they were theirs and not institutionalized by their universities with no or limited Chicano student input. This was most discernable at the U of I where there was tension between students wanting to run the cultural center versus the university wanting to envelop the centers as a part of the institutions. At the UI, the Chicano Indian American Cultural Center (CIACC) was moved physically from being a part of the main campus area to being off-campus.

4.3.1. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

At the U of I, Latino students ran and maintained control of the La Casa Cultural Latina House even though the U of I hired a director who attempted to take over running the house from the students. Latino students wanted a Latino director, and they wanted to have a say in the hiring process. If the La Casa Cultural Latina House director were hired without Latino students’ involvement, they believed they would be usurped there. Their fears were realized when U of I officials wanted the cultural house to be seen as legitimate by the U of I faculty and community. For example, Latino students wanted a former student and summer coordinator for the cultural house to be hired as director. However, he was not selected. This caused anger among Latino students; as outgoing director Phillip A. Llamas notes, “It was with great emotion that the

481. As a reminder, when I refer to the U of I, I use the term “Latino” because it is the term they used almost exclusively.
students took the news that Mr. Rodriguez had not been selected,” which fed the fuels of complaints toward the search for a new director.482

In addition to the tension between the students and the administrators, the university did not want students to run the center because faculty did not take it or the Latino students seriously. As Llamas reports:

Because of the fact that students were in charge previously, many university faculty/staff were reluctant to become involved with an organization that did not enjoy the professional status of an academic department of university office. This often made cooperation with other departments difficult.483

The perception of how the La Casa Cultural Latina House would look to faculty suggests the university’s application of a Eurocentric understanding of what is “professional,” which was someone who could play an authoritative role. Although this gave more “credibility” to the university, there was a backlash from Latino students, as Llamas recounts:

The regularly scheduled hours, the formal office and general policy were radically different from what the students had experienced before. What was credible to the university was not credible to the students. Having been advised by my superiors (The chancellor) that the one must be in charge and not become a peer group member, thus losing authority, we proceeded with a very structured kind of administration. Thus, having established a line of authority and a definite break from the past.

Llamas reports that by the end of 1976, Latino students had a series of meetings that seemed alleviate some of the tension they experienced, but in a July 1977 report, he notes the continued battle between the Latino students and the administration. He describes the tensions:

La Casa once again faced some difficulty with the student population. Because of some personal vendettas due to the dismissal of one work-study student, several members banded together to create some disturbance. This led a petition calling for the dismissal of the Director of La casa to be handed over to the acting director of campus programs and


483. Ibid.

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services . . . However, they noted they were creating a survey to get a sense of satisfaction and their needs.

Similar to the UW, Llamas describes the actions of the Latino students as a “disturbance” and focuses on how they protest—but he does not consider whether their actual concerns are valid. Latino students continued to fight administration over the direction of La Casa Cultural Latina House, as Llamas explains:

The main problem remains to one of control over La Casa. Many students, for a variety of reasons, believe that the director should be responsible and accountable to them . . . . Most of the difficulty, then is to break that train of thought and show them that la casa is here to serve them but remains a body of the University accountable only to the University. University administrators who tend to perpetuate this line of thought, create a feeling of power in students which often times aggravates the situation.

U of I officials attempted to control the students to make them fit into the traditional forms of participation at the university. Although the establishment of the cultural center was created to meet the needs of the Latino students and offer a space where they felt included on campus, the U of I administration wanted to them understand that it “remains a body of the University accountable only to the University.”\textsuperscript{484} This quote showcases that despite the work that the Latino students had done regarding the cultural house, the university still felt it had ownership of their hard work. Instead of changing to allow Latinos to have meaningful spaces on campus, the administration attempted to envelop the cultural centers into part of its established Eurocentric structures. Yet Latino students still did not accept the U of I’s attempts to make them fit into this university model, and they continued to make spaces of their own on campus.

4.3.2. The University of Iowa

At the UI, Chicanos struggled to keep the cultural center visible on campus. The CIACC was located in the central part of campus. Chicano students moved into a house that the Spanish

\textsuperscript{484} Ibid.
department was not using without alerting either the department or the UI administration as a way to “stake a claim” at the university. They eventually petitioned the university administration for the official use of the house. However, this caused tension between the Chicano students and the Spanish department, which had stereotypes about them. As Rusty Barceló recalls,

[The Spanish department] certainly had a stereotype about us as being lower class, you know, speaking inappropriate Spanish . . . . I mean they were speaking the Spanish of Spain . . . . [T]here were allies[,] . . . . but there were other people there who really made life difficult for us . . . . [Y]ou know[,] telling the president . . . we were just these crazy radicals and . . . the lower class of Mexican society . . . .

Although claiming a house without alerting anyone is not the best strategy, the Spanish department’s stereotypes about Chicanos as “crazy radicals” displayed the abhorrence they felt toward the Chicano student activists’ tone as well. The Chicano students were not adhering the “traditional” procedures the UI—and by extension, the Spanish department—expected. Chicano students eventually gained the use of the house, but would still struggle to remain visible on campus.

Members of the CIASU used the house to meet and organize activities, and “despite the fact that only a handful of Chicanos and Indian students were on campus then, a lot of important cultural work by students was accomplished.” The student union established many activities and programs—which at the time were not funded by the UI student senate—such as a newsletter, preschool, and theatre, prison visitations, and many more activities. One of the Chicano students’ major accomplishments was the success of the 1973 Chicano conference:

485. Solis, “‘To Preserve Our Heritage,’” 111.
486. Ibid., 112.
487. El Laberinto (January 1980), box 1, Newsletter Series, El Laberinto Folder, Collection RG 02.03.007, Records of the Latino Native American Cultural Center, Special Collections and University Archives, The University of Iowa.
In the spring of 1973, for example, students held a Chicano conference which drew a thousand people to the UI. Jose Angel Gutiérrez of the Raza Unida Party—the first independent Chicano political party in history was the guest speaker. Bus loads arrived from Chicago and the crowds that thronged the Iowa memorial union where the conference was held and shocked the university population.488

The semester after the spring conference, Chicano students were informed that the cultural center would be moved to an off-campus location. Although the UI stated that the move was to demolish the house to build a space for more parking, the Chicano students found it suspicious that after the conference successfully brought a lot of Chicanos to the central part of campus, the university then decided to move their cultural house. According to the Chicano students, the placement of the new house was “nicely tucked away into an obscure corner of campus.”489 They believed that the university wanted to get Chicano and Indian students “out of sight and out of mind” because of all the activity and work they were doing to fight racism and discrimination and raise Chicano consciousness on the campus.490

Literally moving the cultural center off campus symbolized the continued isolation Chicano students encountered on campus. However, the cultural center continued—even off campus—to provide the space for Chicanos the UI otherwise had failed to provide. The following statement featured in the student newsletter, El Labertino, reveals the importance of the center to the Chicanos there and underlines why they continued to make demands:

Three years ago, the center and union both began in response to the moral and political crises that had been blighting Chicano and Indian peoples for many years. Assimilation, acculturation, genocide, exploitation. It was a response, initially because these things had grown to such a pitch that survival was depend on upon rebellion—but it soon became an expression of our people’s spiritual strivings . . .491

488. Ibid.
489. Ibid.
490. Ibid.
491. Ibid.
The Chicano students show that their agency on their campuses did not consist of acts of rebellion but rather acts of survival, which they felt they needed to see themselves reflected on campuses. The low Chicano enrollment, lack of educational opportunities, and ties between education and economic mobility were important for the Chicano community to combat in order to feel they were regaining what they had lost through exploitation and the pressure to assimilate into Anglo society.

4.3.3. Creating Inclusion for Future Generations

Chicano activism began at these four universities in the early 1970s. The organization of Chicano student groups, establishment of cultural centers, and dedication to recruitment did create small changes in Eurocentric structures by making those spaces available for the following generations of Chicanos who attended these universities. Barceló recollects that the students rather than university staff did the bulk of recruitment:

We went to cornfields, literally, in Moline and at the end of the day all the farm workers would come with their kids, or the migrants would come with their kids, and we would put on a teatro for them . . . . We were in the community more than we were in the classroom.492

Barceló’s quote demonstrates the amount of time Chicano students spent in addition to their responsibilities as students and the commitment they had toward serving their communities. Their recruitment work created a path through which other Chicano students could attend their universities. Barceló describes her tactics for recruitment:

So I always knew that if we could pick one from a community, they would be our entry point for others to follow them. And it’s true. I mean it just worked, that way. I mean, all of the—what’s that family? Connie, Ed, Moreno—every one of those students—everyone and all those children came to the University of Iowa. The whole family. You know, they all started coming. All but one, I think. There are like seven of them. They all came to

Iowa . . . that’s an important story that should be shared at Iowa. That whole family was able to come into Iowa . . . from the Quad Cities. 493

Barceló’s strategy of recruiting entire families was an example of the fabric of change at these four intuitions. The Chicano youth who Barceló and other Chicano university students recruited may not have had the opportunity to go to college or a university if it were not for their commitment and activism. The UM’s establishment of a Chicano Studies department additionally contributed to the academic and economic achievement of the Chicano students who were able to partake in those courses. Alfredo Gonzalez highlights the contributions of such a department at the UM, declaring:

The department awards the B.A. degree, and some of its graduates went on to professional schools and became social workers, judges, attorneys, teachers, psychiatrists, and business persons. Their work in the Chicano studies department helped Chicanos identify proudly with their culture. Their success in the academic world of higher education is a result of that little-known connection. The Chicano sons and daughters of Minnesota can well be proud of their attained ideals, some of which were learned and first realized in the first Chicano studies departments in Minnesota. 494

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, Limon discusses the impact that universities in the Midwest had by training Chicano students from Southwest who returned home. 495 Yet many Midwestern natives who came to these universities also benefited from their activism, along with many generations of their children. For example, at the UM, Manuel Guzman was a student activist who organized and advocated for the establishment of the Chicano Studies department, and he went on to earn a law degree. Guzman’s daughter, Chela, also attended the UM and represented “the second generation of Chicano Studies in Minnesota.” 496

493. Ibid.


495. Ibid.

496. “Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies History,” June 29, 1995, La Raza, box 1, La Raza Student Cultural Center folder, coll. 1234, University Archives, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota.
that Chicano students at these institutions aspired to see were realized not only by some of them during the 1970s but would continue to be enjoyed even today.

4.4. Chapter 4 Summary

Chicano students at the UI, U of I, UM, and UW wanted to maintain and continue their identity not just for themselves but also for future generations. Their dedication to ensuring that their universities increased recruitment of Chicano students, faculty, and staff as well as established Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers was heightened because they wanted representation that would live beyond their time there. Chicano students persisted despite any barriers that their universities tried to put in front of them, and they continued to protest, demonstrate, and call out their universities in the media if they felt they were being unresponsive. As a result, their goals of maintaining their culture and creating spaces were realized, and generations of Chicanos have these pioneering Chicano students to thank.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation reveals the multifaceted ways in which Chicano students attempted to form their own identity in the Midwest during the 1970s. Mexican Americans were in the Midwest decades before these Chicano students arrived on campus, which these Chicano students learned from doing their own research on their state’s Chicano populations. The Chicano students in the Midwest sought to be validated both locally and nationally, as Alfred Gonzalez best exemplifies in his opening remarks at the UM Chicano summer institute by simply saying, “¡Aquí Estamos!” (We Are Here!). Chicano students also sought to create spaces on their campuses that would enable them to create a critical mass of Chicano students. Although the universities’ administrations unevenly provided services and resources to meet the needs of the Chicano students, these students showed agency by continuing to protest to establish Chicano Studies departments and Chicano cultural centers and increase Chicano representation. Not all Chicano students at each university achieved all their demands during the 1970s, but they laid the foundation for the protests that continued into the subsequent decades.

Chicano students in the Midwest wanted to be visible in the national conversations about what it meant to be a Chicanos and to have their existence validated in the Midwest. Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos have been in several Midwestern states since the late 1850s—a fact that today is still often overlooked. This dissertation shows that no matter their geographical location, Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Chicanos have always had their identity tied to the land. In the Southwest, Chicanos felt a connection to the land because it had belonged to Mexico before U.S. annexation. However, Southwestern Chicanos also felt as though they were in an in-between space due to their indigenous and European backgrounds and attempts to fit into the Anglo American culture. Chicanos in the Midwest were additionally in a
space of in between because they were trying to find their identity in having Mexican heritage, being a U.S. citizen located in the Midwest, and not fitting into the Southwestern model of a Chicano. Midwestern Chicanos saw themselves as oppressed by the Anglo American society like their Southwestern counterparts were, but they were not visible to the Southwestern Chicanos either. The invisibility Chicanos students felt contributed to their drive to be heard and seen in the national, Southwestern, and Midwestern contexts. Still, their goal was not only to create visibility of Chicanos and effect change that time but also for future generations of Chicanos.

At the 1975 “Reflecciones de la Raza” UI conference, George Garcia reflected on Chicanos’ historical experience in the Midwest with a session titled “Historical Heritage of La Raza in Iowa and the Midwest.” He remarked on how Chicano students were instrumental to the formation of Chicano identity in the Midwest and made influential changes to the structures of higher education on the UI campus, proudly proclaiming:

The Chicano students . . . who have raised some fundamental questions about our whole identity, and have been the spearheads, and the movement of the Chicano in Iowa. We also have the Chicano students at this university that have been active over the last six, seven years. The annual conference, for example, is a result of two or three Chicanos who came in 1968, ’69, ’70 and began to demand the university to do something for them.

Garcia’s discussion of the impact of Chicano student activism underlines the main argument of this dissertation: their persistence for equitable representation in their predominately white institutions, which began in the late 1960s and continued through the 1970s and into the 1980s in the Midwest, created fundamental shifts in their universities’ Eurocentric structures. Before these Chicano students came to the UI, U of I, UM, and UW, these campuses did not have Chicano student organizations, Chicano cultural centers, or Chicano Studies departments. Currently, all four have a Chicano/Latino student organization, Chicano/Latino cultural center, and

497. Garcia, “The Historical Heritage of La Raza.”

498. Ibid.
Chicano/Latino Studies department and/or minor. Yet, what is most remarkable about these changes is that they were effected by a small group of Chicano students—at times as few as three—at these institutions. When these Chicano students arrived, there were fewer than twenty-five Chicano students across all four campuses that had at least 30,000 students in their total student populations. These Chicano students’ focus on recruitment and creating spaces for future Chicanos led to a significant increases in their Chicano/Latino populations. The most recent Latino population at the UI is 6.6 percent and 3.4 percent at the UM. At the UW, Latinos make up 5.4 percent of the population, and at the U of I, 9.3 percent. The Chicano students’ fight for increased recruitment during the 1970s made a difference in Chicano/Latino enrollment at these universities. In addition to exploring the past efforts and success of Chicano student activism, this dissertation also reveals four historical contributions to contemporary student activism: coalition building, the power of small numbers, raising awareness, and persistence.

**Coalition Building**

Coalition building is an experience Chicano Studies scholars note is unique to the Midwest. The students in my study had to build coalitions with other groups to establish a critical mass to make their demands. Chicano students did not have many more than twenty-five Chicano students with whom they could organize when they first came to their universities, nor

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were there large communities outside the universities in which they could find refuge, compared with the large numbers that existed in the Southwest. Therefore, at the UI, the two Chicano students included a Native American woman in their group, and the three of them established a Chicano cultural house and Chicano Native American student union. Chicano students at the UM, UW, and U of I organized with Puerto Ricans and other non-Chicano Latino ethnicities to create a large enough group to start making demands of their universities. Coalition building allowed greater visibility not to just one group but to all the groups involved.

The Power of Small Numbers

As noted above, Chicano students were few on these campuses. At the UI, there were three students organizing; at the UM, there were four to six; and at the UW and U of I, there were no more than twenty-five. Although Chicano students on these campuses did not number in the thousands like they did in the blowouts in Los Angeles in the 1960s, they were able to organize and protest in a manner that got their universities officials’ attention. They accessed university administrations and challenged them to meet their needs on campus. Lastly, as a result of their small numbers, they had to make more effort to find other Chicanos and maintain those relationships. For example, they allowed anyone who wanted to lead the opportunity to do so allowing greater opportunities for Chicanas to lead.

Raising Awareness

Chicano students were able to use university newspapers and conferences to make themselves visible on their campuses and to university officials. The awareness conferences they organized did result in some administrators acknowledging the large Chicano community in the Midwest. The conferences also allowed Chicanos from the Southwest to become aware of the
existence of Midwestern Chicanos, including that they had a historical presence and felt the same oppression in the educational, political, and social spheres. Conferences were also a space where Chicano students would decide to demand for Chicano Studies Departments. It was not only at conferences in the Southwest like the Santa Barbara Conference making these demands, but Chicanos in the Midwest decided to call for a department at the UM at the UM’s institute for higher education in the summer of 1970.

Persistence

Chicano students began to organize and make demands of their universities by the early 1970s. Yet, they continued to push their universities to meet their demands throughout the remainder of the 1970s, into the 1980s, to create spaces where their culture was represented. Chicano students had future Chicano student populations in mind as they continued to persist beyond the obstacles they faced from university officials. These Chicano students were working toward a cause that was larger than themselves because they fought for an increased number of Chicano students on campus as well as the establishment of Chicano Studies departments and cultural centers even though they would no longer be there as students to reap the benefits themselves. This indicates that persistence may pay off not only during the time of the protest but also in the future in ways that those who were originally protesting can witness, but not personally benefit from.

Despite their small campus populations, Chicano students were unified in their interest to preserve their heritage. This need to maintain connections with their cultural Mexican background in the Midwest was the underlying motivation of the student activism found across these four campuses. They continuously protested until their demands were met, and when they saw that their universities were beginning to ignore or dismantle their hard work, they protested
again. Chicano students’ tenacity was apparent, because by 1980, they were ready to continue protesting to the administrations to ensure that their universities would continue to support and validate their existence on campus. University administrators tried to stall the Chicano protests—intentionally or unintentionally—yet Chicano students never stopped their quest to be heard on their campuses. This dissertation illustrates how Chicano students created and fought for their own representation on their universities over the decade of the 1970s. Their legacy lives on in the Chicano and Latino student activism found on campuses in the current political climate today.
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