The 1993 Hunger Strike

An Official History

The following is a brief history of the U.S. Latino Studies Struggle. It is biased as is any other history. It is intended to affirm the students who have participated in this struggle, to refute unsubstantiated constructions of reality, and to indoctrinate those who haven't taken the time to educate themselves on the issues.

In March 1988, students took over Jenness House, then the Deans' Office. "We find it necessary to demand action on the part of the administration, not only as a step to reaffirm its policies to minority students and faculty, but also to reaffirm its commitment to the Williams community as a whole." Their demands included: "Two visiting professorships for Hispanic-American faculty in any department, effective 1988-89" and "One Black and one Hispanic-American tenure track Professor for any Division Three department by 1989-90."

In April 1991 three students endured a three day hunger strike. "We write to you concerning a situation that for Latina/o, Mexican/a, and Puerto Rican students here at Williams has become unbearable: the negation of our existence as students with a culture and reality of our own.... Today, we start a hunger strike because we are suddenly faced with the reality that this school has not offered any curricular means for non-Latinos to lessen their ignorance about Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Latina/o United Statesians, and nothing to us who have the

Multiculturalism at Williams College
...And Its Discontents

by Gladys M. Jimenez-Munoz

I am a Bolin Fellow in the History Department. This semester I teach a course called U.S. Women of Color and Cultural History (Hist-306). My students are reading and discussing the works of many women of color from a new perspective: namely, that the words of these women regarding their views and lives is just as valid, or even more important, than what white scholars (of both genders) have written about women of color —if and when such writings are ever included in regular courses. We have examined the tension that exists between (a) white scholars intent on legitimizing their own "areas of expertise" on people of color and (b) the conceptual and creative practices of women of color seriously involved in self-reflective critiques in the process of re-examining and reconstructing their own life histories as women of color. Two parallel conflicts provided the larger context to this course: One was the ongoing struggle of Latina/Latino students to form a Latino Studies Program. The other was my treatment as a Bolin fellow.

The Latina/Latino students studying at Williams College are requesting that the administration acknowledge their right to have a say and a vote in the college's decisions regarding how the Latino Studies position is going to be filled and what is going to be taught. In other words, Latina/Latino students want to actively participate in how

Students, Faculty, Frank: It's Supposed To Hurt

by Keith Hedlund

This article worries. It knows that it may criticize or satirize people who are not racist or dishonest, people who believe in multiculturalism, who have done much to affect change, who have listened and tried and been pushed and pulled already. It worries that this may constitute an inappropriate form of discourse, that it may not sufficiently and sophisticatedly take none of the complexities of the particular situation, and that, here especially in the womb of the college's own newsletter, it may amount to a certain form of betrayal (written, in fact, by continued on page 4

Reflecting on the Cause

by Shawn McDougal

The theme of Black History month this year was "The Acquisition of Power in the 90's". On the face of it, this theme seems as natural as, well, as peach pie. I mean, What can we do to empower ourselves? right? Everyone thinks "empowerment" is a positive goal. An important question never brought to the forefront of collective discourse, a question whose answer makes all the difference in the world as to what our future will be, is Empowerment for what? or continued on page 6
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their lives and views are going to be represented within academia. These Latina/Latino students are asking for something that is not new nor recent. As a matter of fact, their struggle is the direct successor of the struggles many of us were involved in twenty years ago. The right of these students to such participation has been recognized in the more progressive programs that exist in other colleges and universities.

For instance, in Binghamton University-SUNY (where I come from) the Program Committee of the Latin America and Caribbean Area Studies Program has five student representatives with a say and a vote in the committee's decisions: two from the Caribbean Studies Association (undergraduate), two from the Latin American Student Union (undergraduate), and one from the Latino Graduate Student Union. The representatives of these organizations are able to participate in recruitment discussions and decisions, where they are subject to the same confidentiality requirements as the faculty that make up most of the committee. It wasn't easy to obtain these rights, among other things because the SUNY system is a public institution and nowhere near as well endowed economically as Williams College. This degree of student participation was hard-won: it resulted from the struggles that took place in Binghamton and in other colleges and universities from the 1960s to the early 1980s for greater student rights, particularly for the creation of "ethnic studies" and women's studies programs that would address the cultural and pedagogical needs of historically subordinated populations within the United States.

The students' trials and tribulations have already been documented by the Latinas and Latinos themselves in their position papers and public statements, as well as in the press coverage their activities have received. However, the administration has decided not to respond constructively to these students' demands. As I write this, some 21 students are involved in a hunger strike which has included the participation of other students at Williams College (including African Americans, Asian Americans, whites, and/or members of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community).

Although Williams College authorities have finally admitted the need of creating a Latino Studies curriculum, during each step of the process the administration has insisted that they, and they alone, are capable of defining the crucial questions involved: What is a Latino scholar? What kind of Latino scholars should come to Williams College? What type of student input is appropriate and at what levels? What are the merits of student suggestions and aspirations?

This process corroborates one of Williams College's serious problems: it brings people of color here and then assumes that "they" are going to act the way that Williams College thinks people of color should act. Meanwhile, the College does not take into consideration the specificities involved — past experience, needs, aspirations, age, etc. — always assuming that Williams College knows what's best for "these people." A second example of this attitude is my experience here as a Bolin Fellow.

My dissertation fellowship stated that fellows were expected to "devote the bulk of their time during the academic year to the completion of their dissertation work" and were "expected to teach one one-semester course." My goal was to spend the fall of 1992 completing my dissertation and to teach a course during the spring of 1993.

As Bolin fellow in History, I gave two lectures during the Fall of 1992 at the Williams College Multicultural Center (October 28, November 19), taking part in a number of other campus activities and faculty meetings. I also participated as a speaker in two conferences outside of Williams College: the International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association in Los Angeles (September 24-26) and the Latinas Unidas Conference at SUNY-New Palz (October 24). In December, I helped two Latina students from Williams College — Linda Ponce de Le_n (93) and Charlotte Neuhaus (93) — in a project that required that they go to Puerto Rico during the Winter break. After considerable efforts, I arranged interviews for them with the extremely busy people that directed the "Fundaci_n SIDA" (Puerto Rico AIDS Foundation). Furthermore, the friends that I contacted allowed these students to obtain room and board with reputable people during the height of the tourist season there.

During the first week of January 1993, I went to the Centro de Estudios Puertorrique_nos' research library at Hunter College-CUNY in Manhattan. This library had a number of archival materials that I needed to consult in order to complete my dissertation. By the end of January I finished the first part of my dissertation in this way ending the first part of my obligation as a Bolin Fellow.

I began teaching my course in early February accepting 43 students, due to the interest generated by the course content and the student demand this interest created. It struck me as odd that,
given the much-touted interest of Williams College in multiculturalism, I kept hearing students say over and over again that this was one of the few opportunities many of them had to take a course on (and by) women of color. All the while — and with the exception of two colleagues (in a Department of more than a dozen professors)—, I was the “invisible woman.” Hardly anyone spoke to me or made me feel at home there.

In early March, various students informed me that in their meeting with History Department Chair Peter Frost, the latter had commented that the Department was “pissed” at me. Maybe this was one of the reasons why I was rejected for the Latino Studies position I applied to in this department — although I never received a clear explanation in either case. Why? It seems that the way I had defined my duties during the fall of 1992 was not to the liking of the Department’s members. Yet, like in one of Kafka’s stories, a strange metamorphosis was about to occur: from being pissed at me, just as suddenly I was about to become the departmental darling and the center of everybody’s consideration.

When the Latina/Latino students on campus seriously questioned the procedures and decisions of the joint administration-History Department Latino Studies search committee, surprisingly enough, I was offered a visiting professor position for this slot (1993-94). Overnight, I received a rash of unsolicited attention: people I had never seen or heard from in the department began treating me like a long lost friend! I felt underestimated and treated as a child: did they think I had no memory — even of the recent past?

Coming from the Caribbean and specifically from a colonial context, I learned at a young age that whenever white people have these sudden changes of heart, it is time for us “natives” to get restless. Or, put it another way, as my grandfather used to say whenever other people didn’t make any sense: “ellos son blancos y se entienden” (“they’re white, and I guess they must know what they’re talking about”). But this wasn’t the end of the mentioned metamorphosis; the worst was yet to come.

At this time I received an offer from SUNY-College at Oneonta. It was a tenure-track position and the people there (not just students, but also faculty and administrators) were extremely interested in my work and in what I had to offer as a professor. Even more importantly, from the very beginning they showed a keen interest in what I was doing. Although I am indebted to the students at Williams College, particularly the students of color, my final decision was not that difficult.

When I declined the visiting professor position at Williams College, the metamorphosis was to be completed shortly. I soon learned that Dean Suzanne Graver had openly told a delegation of Latina/Latino students that I was “the worst Bolin Fellow experience in the history of Williams College.” I consider this remark to be most unprofessional. My reflections on this comment have led me to reach very scary conclusions. Firstly, this seems like a case of “sour grapes”: in this light, I was an ingrate that couldn’t even figure out her own best interests. But my second inference is even scarier. If indeed I was “the worst Bolin Fellow experience in the history of Williams College,” then does that mean that Dean Graver was willing to offer that to the Latina/Latino students at Williams College? In her opinion, are these students so insignificant that they only deserve the worst?

There are two problems here. First, I have been infantilized and this is part of the process through which racism is put in place. The second problem is that racism infantilizes the Latina/Latino students. They too are viewed by the administration as incapable of representing themselves. Within this context, as in the words of W.E.B. Du Bois in Souls of Black Folk, I too had to “look at [myself] through the eyes of others,” I too had to “measure [my] soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.” And, paraphrasing Fanon in Black Skin, White Masks, I not only had to be a Latina scholar; I had to be a Latina in relation to the [white] faculty and administrators that were defining for me just what being a Latina scholar was.

As I write this, many other things are happening. Cesar Chavez died at the end of last week, literally fighting to the death for the rights of Chicanos, working people, and Latinas and Latinos to be heard and to be recognized as citizens in a country that considers us/them to be aliens, strange creatures. Hundreds of thousands of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals marched in Washington, D.C. in order to be heard and to be recognized as citizens of a country that also sees us/them as aliens and strange creatures. I have a number of responsibilities as a teacher, as a member of the Latina/Latino community and, as part of a larger group of diverse people still fighting to be heard and to be recognized as full citizens, full human beings. Given this historical context, I remind the faculty, administrators, and “mainstream” Williams College community to think again the nice things you have said and advertised about multiculturalism in the light of what too many of us are still going through.

I remind the faculty, administrators, and “mainstream” Williams College community to think again the nice things you have said and advertised about multiculturalism in the light of what too many of us are still going through. There is nothing painless about racism, sexism, and heterosexism. Your mainstream vision must move well beyond turning us — the “different”— into what Trinh Minh-ha in Woman, Native, Other calls “someone’s private zoo.”
someone who’s been accused of being a good ole’ white liberal himself). This article, however, is written for people who may have said: I support multiculturalism, but this strike is unwarranted; I support Latino Studies, but this is... insert your preferred adjective: untimely, extreme, counterproductive, over dramatic, even: spoiled-bratish. This article is written for those who have recently felt or thought: we’ve changed so much and given so much this year. Doesn’t anybody care about that?

Giving birth

A scene in Citizen Kane pictures Leland approaching Kane as his esteemed companion is composing a press release about the various rights and changes he will disseminate and implement if elected governor of New York. Leland says something to this effect: someday, esteemed companion, these rights which you are now so happily giving them (the people)—someday they (the people) will begin to demand them from you, and at that moment you will begin your fall from grace. Eventually, we witness this fall, which leads finally to Kane’s throwing a violent tantrum in his bedroom. My thesis: Kane’s perspective during his demise reflects well the attitudes of the administration, much of the faculty, and most of the student body through the course of the recent hunger strike.

There is little doubt in my mind that Frank Oakley, for one, is and has been dedicated to the changes fostering multiculturalism at Williams. But I also feel that he—and this description applies to all

us good liberals I’m describing—wants to give these changes, wants, moreover, for his actions to be appreciated, and wants, in fact, to be loved. When students began making demands—students in whom he had put much trust, to whom he had shown he was on their side—and when they began to ask for changes on their terms, he seemed to emanate a sense of having felt betrayed. A misunderstanding of the students requests, at one point he angrily told a group of Latino students that he would rather resign than allow students to have a final say on faculty hirings. The first emergency faculty meeting during the strike, I’ve been informed, he opened with a ten-minute speech concerning the history of his dedication to the multiculturalizing of Williams.

Such dedication few deny, nor that the strike may have caused certain forms of anxiety. The posture of this article, however, is that recent anxieties are not pure and simply a sign of the strikers’

“extremism,” but of good liberals being pushed to let go of what they have always wanted to give. President Oakley has variously alluded to such difficulties as “birth pangs.”

Good behavior

The pains of birth take many forms. A Record staff editorial, for example, criticized the hunger strike for having “disaffected many students by taking such an extreme course of action.” The strikers, it said, “must be able to work with the College in the spirit of compromise and understanding.”

Given their appeal, arguments such as these reek with ignorance and naiveté. First of all, they falsely assume that the means by which the faculty and administration had entreated the students’ “compromise” and “understanding” were both effective and of pure motivation. Throughout the strike students were highly unaware of the bullshit that characterized the processes by which the college had been attempting to fulfill its promises concerning Latino Studies hiring. In its impassioned letter to the students during the strike, however, even the administration admitted that mistakes had been made. The strikers asserted that the problems lay deeper than the administration and faculty were willing to acknowledge. Prof. Munoz’s letter elucidates the particularly racist quality of these problems.

The Record’s arguments concerning the “alienation” caused by the strike, furthermore, fails to take account of the alienation that preceded the strike. Sentiments like the Record’s portray Williams as a harmonious place occasionally interrupted by conflict, rather than a place in which conflict is an incessant reality and its acknowledgment an occasional interruption.

Such sentiments, of course, permeate Williams life. I can think of few collegiate institutions, for example, at which political protests are regularly sponsored by the deans’ office. On the first day of the strike, as strikers and supporters gathered on Chapin steps, Dean’s Graver, Edwards, and Hernandez stood calmly in front of the protest. Graver asked me politely what I thought about all of this, telling me her opinion was that the strike would only undermine efforts, and she didn’t think it was a good idea. I blinked and even had to ask myself: was she supposed to think it was a good idea? I imagine a protest years hence, at which Williams students plan to burn Dean X in effigy, he visiting the students the night before to ensure that they have gotten his hair right.

The fact of the matter is: the strikers and the administration were not on the same side. The strikers felt they could not continue with “appropriate discourse” because that discourse, as framed by the administration, assumed things the students found reprehensible. The administration and much of the faculty, it seemed, wanted to deny that the students believed that the curricular and administrative structure of Williams College, in contrast to the literature published by the admissions office, was infected with a politics that the students found fundamentally unjust and educationally anemic.

In its letter to the students, the administration contrasted the hunger strike with the “deliberative processes and consultative discourse that should prevail in a community of learning.” Such language is not a simple request for legitimate intercourse. Conscious or not, it is an interest-ridden strategy of containment. The administration’s demand for “consultative discourse is a demand
for nothing other than discourse on their terms. There is at least one revealing moment in the administration's letter: "The form of protest [the strikers] have adopted undermines satisfactory process, in relation not only to the matter immediately at hand but also to the larger question of future student participation in the faculty appointment process." This statement is nothing if not a skimpily veiled threat.

As do our resentment and our sense of betrayal, our talk about

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appropriate discourse often serves as a defense against demands that our dedication, good intentions, and conceptual revolutions be realized structurally. In his "Letter From a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King notes that direct political actions are always met with criticisms that they are ill-timed, have good goals but means that are too extreme, or that they are undermining progress—with indulgent dramatization—on issues that need real concern. This is not to say that people making such criticisms do not indeed believe in them. It implies that what literally constitutes the reasonable, the possible, and the appropriate is always ideological—therefore, that justice may often, if not always, appear in exactly such clothing.

Growing up

During the course of the strike, one could have compared students' attitudes toward the faculty and administration to the attitude of children who are struggling with the possibility that their parents are not perfect. By this I don't mean imperfect as in "the jerks won't let us have kegs," but really imperfect, as in a capacity for being simply and abominably wrong. The infantilization of students on the part of some faculty and administrators has functioned in part as a self-parody. As Professor Munoz notes, furthermore, infantilization has been an issue of race as much as one of age.

Dean Graver told me at the strike that the administration and the faculty had learned a lot from the students during the trials of the Latino Studies hiring process. Why should we not assume that there's a lot more ignorance where that came from? This morning I attended a meeting with the team of Latino Studies experts who will be advising the college on hiring. Already they confirmed, as strikers and supporters had suspected, that the college's insistence upon the scarcity of Latino Studies was largely born out of misinformation, as well as a certain defeatist attitude that often accompanies attempts at radical curricular changes. Tom States' recent attempts in the Record to point out which administrators are really dedicated to multiculturalism and which are not misses a crucial fact: that it is possible to feel dedicated to multiculturalism and yet not be, as well as to support some changes and yet be unaware of certain forms of structural inequality and degrees of inequality's pervasiveness.

The administration's statements in its letter that Williams is a "compassionate college and one that cares deeply about the health and well-being of its members" is, in context, both vacuous and disingenuous. First of all, it does not account for the administration's interest in maintaining a certain definition of what constitutes "well-being." Secondly, such an emotionally-based argument is no more politically tenable than would have been arguments that the strikers were right simply because fasting was painful. It insults the changes that have been made at Williams to imply that the changes' significance is anything other than the changes themselves. What Kane never understands: that the democracy he attempts to distribute is valuable for being democracy, not for being his personal sacrifice—and that this is why the people begin to make demands.

The need for change will always overrun administrations' laudings of their own reforms. For this reason, political pressure must insist upon being unreasonable. Even considering Oakley's interest in multicultural reform, Williams' history in the last ten or fifteen years suggests that the college would not be as multicultural as it is today if it had not been for certain students making "impossible" demands at certain "inappropriate" moments.

In my mind, this particular strike clearly accomplished certain things. 1. It spurred the faculty to talk about multicultural curricular issues in ways it had not before. 2. It is now more likely that greater effort will be afforded to bringing a qualified Latino Studies scholar to Williams—both more swiftly and more effectively than would otherwise have been the case. 3. I hope: it challenged good Williams liberals as to the depth of their commitment to issues of equality and representation.

The morning of the first day of the strike, I found myself putting up supportive posters around campus, and at a meeting just before the protest, someone mentioned that they needed people to put up more posters. "Who has already put up posters?" he asked. Proudly, I said I had put up thirty. "Here," he said, "Take thirty more." I tried to speak, but could only think: why would they push me like that—I had already given so much of my time that day . . .

The entire argument that we have given so much this year assumes that these changes are not benefiting all of us. Moreover, it assumes that these changes are somehow ours to give. Martin Luther King was fond of quoting Amos on the way in which political transformations have a way of appearing that frustrates individuals' capacity to take credit for their appearance. For King, human equality exists prior to any human beings' act of ownership. The concept of "giving," then, for him, possesses a certain quality of the prepositional. "I hate and despise your festes," he quotes from Amos. "I take no pleasure in your solemnities. Your serial offerings I will not accept, nor consider your stall-fed peace offerings. . . . Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."
enjoys the benefits of her status as an "educated" person, but she
doesn't see the role of education as a filter for the
conferment of that special status to a minority of the popula-
tion so that they may become the "leaders" of tomorrow,
reproducing the hierarchical structure and the concomitant
ways of analyzing the world and understanding the self. So,
not seeing all this, she agitates and organizes for better
funded public schooling, and for the institution of a more
multicultural curriculum. She doesn't stop to think about
why so many people hate school (even people who are
wealthy, white, and go to nice private schools). She doesn't
stop to think about how traditional schooling, by its very
authoritarian structure, seeks to inculcate docile, conformist
attitudes that deempower the individual, and discourage
independent thought. She doesn't see how institutional
education valorizes only the skills that are conducive to
continued (re)production of profit in a society that functions
just as ours does now- supplying more grease for the gears
of society's economic machine, and, therefore, effectively
breaks the creative, inquisitive, imaginative spirit that most
people are born with. It produces individuals who have little
conception of their potential as human beings, beyond what
is useful for the continuation of said status quo. Her educa-
tion has not taught her to challenge the assumptions on
which that education is built. In fact, it has done quite
the opposite. It has taught her that the solution to the
problems and social ills that education helps produce and maintain
is more education. Her actions, completely contrary to all her
good intentions, do not change what is wrong with society,
but only reinforce it.

An example from the recent hunger strike (concerning
the College's unwillingness to seriously consider the desires
of concerned students or put forth its best efforts in the
institutionalization of a U.S. Latino Studies program): most
professors (even minority professors, who we were sure
would be "down with the struggle") were irate at a "bunch
of uppity students questioning their professionalism" and
challenging their traditional authority. To them, the very
two students serving as full members of departmental
search committees was incredible. I would argue that these
people have- because of their status as leaders and profes-
sionals (the high priests of the Ivory Tower)- internalized
forms of thinking that inhibit them from even considering
new conceptions that would seriously challenge the status
quo. Even though some of them may have at some point in
their careers fought for change, now, because they have
positions of respect and relative power in the current struc-
ture, the implementation of anything to upset that structure
becomes unthinkable.

There is a maxim that I'm sure we've all heard. It goes
something like this: "Power corrupts, and absolute power
corrupts absolutely." If we want an empowerment that
means more than simply becoming the new "top-dogs" in
the rat-race (a game that most of us who have historically
lost already intuit is profoundly corrupt), if we want an
empowerment that means a better and brighter tomorrow,
not just for one particular group of people, but for humanity
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Moved by the Faculty:

That the faculty supports the suggestion that a small group of students be closely involved in a consultative role in the search process for a regular faculty member in U.S. Latino Studies. Any interested student may apply to Professor O'Connor and the Dean's Office to be a member. The general idea is to have a group of students who would commit to careful participation in the process by reading materials, attending each public presentation by the candidates, and then giving their considered, individual, judgments to Professor O'Connor who will convey them to the departments and the Committee on Appointments and Promotions. The questions of which materials will be given to the students is given is left to the participating departments. But, in general, concerned students will be guaranteed a consultative role in the search process and their views will be communicated to the departments and to the Committee on Appointments and Promotions.

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right and responsibility to study and learn about our experiences in the United States.” They requested “at least two classes offered for next fall, one on the Chicana/o Experiences and one on the Puerto Rican Experiences in the United States, as well as full-time Latino-United Statistians in the admissions office. The classes must be taught by Chicano and Puerto Rican professors.” The position for a tenure track professor came into being and a multi-departmental search initiated by Romance Language, Psychology, English, and History.

In 1992 Professor Renique was hired as a visiting professor in the History department. He applied for the tenure track position, but was rejected. A candidate in the psychology department was offered the position, but declined. The position remained empty. In 1993 the visiting professor was hired for another year, and Gladys Jimenez-Munoz was chosen as a Bolin Fellow to teach one course: “U.S. Women of Color and Culture.” Both applied for the tenure track position, Renique for the second time, but neither were recommended to the U.S. Latino Search Committee by the History department. However, three other candidates were recommended to the Search Committee by the Psychology, English and Spanish departments, but both students and faculty agreed they were unsuitable for the position. Latino/a students questioned the decision not to consider Renique and Munoz and on February 9 met with Dean Graver and Professor Brown, Chair of the U.S. Latino Search Committee. They stated they were powerless to further question the History department’s decision, and directed the students to the History department.

Between February 10 and 25 teams of students met with individual members of the History department to learn about the rationale behind their judgement; the faculty could not provide a coherent or logical explanation regarding why the professors were unacceptable. Individual professors had varying perceptions of the search, and some were uninformed about the process. There was confusion among the faculty as to the meaning of an “add-on” position, and fear of competition for positions in the future. The students discovered disturbing attitudes about how U.S. Latino Studies was understood and defined as well as departmental politics that seemed to inhibit the fair consideration of candidates. At this point the process itself became suspect to the students.

On February 25 students met again with Dean Graver and Professor Brown and were told things like the two Latinos in the Deans’ Office was demonstration of the College’s support for Latinos. Graver also suggested a possible resolution: hiring a professor in the Spanish department and training her over three years to develop U.S. Latino courses. On February 26 the students submitted a document outlining the discrepancies in the search process and requested consideration of the tenure track position be re-opened to Renique and Jimenez-Munoz.

On March 1 students met with Professor Frost, the Chair of the History department. He agreed to investigate the candidates’ applications and find out about their research by asking them to give job talks. However, on March 8 the History department decided to offer Jimenez-Munoz, to whom they had rejected a tenure track position, a one year visiting position. On March 9 Dean Graver, the Search Committee, and members of the History department met with students to inform them of their decision, and Professor Frost admitted as a new chair he had made a mistake in agreeing to reconsider Renique and Jimenez-Munoz for the tenure track position.

On March 10 students met with President Oakley, who stated he would rather resign than allow students to have the final say in who gets hired, misunderstanding the students’ request for a fair consideration of the candidates as a demand that one of them necessarily be hired. On March 15 the students submitted a second document, Por Nuestra Genio (For Our People), to all parties involved outlining their rationale and response to the faculty and administration’s concerns. On April 7 students met with the History department where faculty expressed their hurt and anger. Students met with the trustees the next day.

On April 12 Jimenez-Munoz was offered a tenure track position at another college. Renique, after twice being rejected for a tenure track position, was offered another one year visiting position. On April 14 students meet with Dean Graver, President Oakley and Dean Hernandez and restated their position. On April 21 Renique decided not remain at Williams for another year.

On April 22 students submit their demands: a one year visiting professorship in addition to the tenure track position in the History department, and increased student involvement in the process of

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appointing the U.S. Latino Advisory Committee members as well as the visiting and tenure track positions. On April 23 students met with President Oakley and Professor O'Connor, chair of the 1993-1994 U.S. Latino Studies Search Committee, and announced the hunger strike. The following day students held a rally on Chapin steps to inform the campus.

On April 26 the strikers met with members of the departments involved in the search. An emotional discussion ensued, the students expressing their frustration and the faculty a mixture of hostility, surprise, and concern. One faculty member said he was going to advise his department to withdraw from the search, others questioned students qualifications in evaluating candidates. Nothing was resolved at this meeting, but understanding on both sides was begun. A letter was issued that day by Dean Edwards, Graver and President Oakley extolling the College's "vigorous effort to introduce U.S. Latino studies into the curriculum" and decrying the students' use of coercion in "dictating the form student involvement in such a search must take." That night students met with a liaison committee composed of Dean Edwards and Hernandez and Professors Hildebrand and O'Connor. They informed the students that faculty would not accept students have voting privileges on hiring decisions, and expressed concern over limiting the search the History department.

The students designed a compromise: they opened the visiting position to Political Science, Anthropology or Sociology, and open the tenure track position to Sociology, Political Science or English. They withdrew the demand for voting privileges, and instead asked that non-voting seniors be placed on the Search Committee so that they could read the applicants recommendations without the possibility of having to take a course from that professor. They requested the Director of the Multicultural Center be added as a voting member, and that students be involved in the advertisement and recruitment process.

On April 27 the faculty had an emergency meeting. The student compromise was presented, but was not considered in light of their own agenda. The Faculty Steering Committee made three motions: "1) that the faculty fully supports both the college's efforts to make a regular tenure-track appointment in U.S. Latino Studies, and the formation of an external committee of experts to guide and advise us in the search, 2) that the faculty requests that all departments and programs undertake discussion and review of their processes for student involvement in the faculty recruitment process... 3) That the faculty, while welcoming discussion with students about specific aspects of the appointment process, reaffirms its right and responsibility to frame and implement the policies for making faculty appointment, reappointment, and promotion decisions, and to recommend to the Board of Trustees the decisions that result from that process." Professor Raymond Baker brought a fourth motion that was eventually passed in this form: "That the faculty supports the suggestion that a small group of students be closely involved in a consultative role in the search process for a regular faculty member in U.S. Latino Studies. Any interested student may apply to Professor O'Connor and the Dean's Office to be a member. The general idea is to have a group of students who would commit to careful participation in the process by reading materials, attending each public presentation by the candidates, and then giving their consider-

ered, individual, judgments to Professor O'Connor who will convey them to the departments and the Committee on Appointments and Promotions. The questions of which materials will be given to the students is given is left to the participating departments. But, in general, concerned students will be guaranteed a consultative role in the search process and their views will be communicated to the departments and to the Committee on Appointments and Promotions."

That night a group of faculty who were generally trusted by the students delivered the resolutions. Although the resolutions essentially reaffirmed the status quo, the students decided to draft an agreement. The document essentially addressed 1) the formation of an ad hoc faculty committee to advise students which would be selected by students, 2) the responsibility of the Minority Coalition Election Committee to select students for the U.S. Latino Studies Search Committee, 3) selection of faculty members on the Search Committee, and 4) the role of the ad hoc committee in departments' reviews of student involvement in the faculty recruitment process. The document was to be signed by President Oakley, Dean Edwards and Graver, and Professor O'Connor. Unfortunately, only Edwards and O'Connor were present that night, but in a sign of good faith that the agreement was acceptable to both sides, the students left believing Oakley and Graver would sign it.

However, after endorsing a completely vague faculty resolution on student involvement in the search process and disregarding the students' good faith, Graver refused to sign the agreement because the wording of the third agreement was too vague. So that afternoon students reworded section three, and the hunger strike officially came to an end.

Reflecting on the Cause

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in general, then it's time we start taking that maxim to heart. We must question traditional forms of power and authority. We must question the very models with which we propose change. Given a plan, we must ask ourselves such questions as, Does this plan address a root cause of what we want to change? What would actually happen if this plan were successful? Do the participants involved in this plan's implementation have room to develop an empowered thinking for themselves, or do they continue to look to authorities for guidance? (This should indicate how truly empowering the plan's change would be.) In our struggles for change we must be careful not to incorporate the established ways of thinking in our new institutions. We must not think just as the status quo would have us, in the same terms, with the same values. We must be bold, we must be imaginative, and we must be willing to sacrifice the security of the tried-and-true, if the struggles of our ancestors, and of disempowered people across the world and throughout history, are to have any lasting meaning.