

REPORT BY DR. MARIA E. ZUNIGA

**VISIT TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF NUEVO LEON
MONTERREY, MEXICO**

VISITATION: 8-3-99 TO 8-9-99

The intent of this proposal was to visit two schools of social work in Mexico to identify what potential there might be for an exchange program for faculty/students. Contact was made with three programs, the graduate school at Monterrey, (Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon), the school in Durango and UNAM in Mexico City. Monterrey and Mexico City responded and were very interested. I discovered that summer time is not a good time for contacting schools since faculty are often gone for the summer duration. I was unable to get a viable response from Durango.

The plan was to spend 3-4 days in Monterrey and 3-4 days in Mexico City. In late July, Mexico City's UNAM continued to have student demonstrations and the faculty advised me that my coming at that time would be difficult since I would not have access to the campus or their school, due to the unrest.

Therefore the only site I visited was the School of Social Work in Monterrey, from August 4 to August 9, 1999. The goals of the visit were met in the following manner:

Goal One: enlist faculty and administrators from the Mexican school in discussing the potential for developing an international program with their school.

Meetings were held with the Director of the program, Lic. Cantu and the administrator for doctoral programs, Lic. Maria Zuniga Coronado. They are very interested in an exchange. Monterrey is interested in exchanging faculty and students, initially informally, during the summertime or at a time that insures enough time for them to plan for the trips since they will need to raise funds for both student and faculty travel. Since this was the vacation time for all faculty, there was no other faculty present with whom I could discuss plans.

The need that was articulated by their Director Lic. Cantu and her assistant Lic. Maria Zuniga Coronado, was to teach faculty and supervisors in the field about social work casework. The thrust of the curriculum for this school is a research/community development focus that insures students are able to work with macro/community projects, to use research to identify community need and to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions, and to facilitate group process.

However, there is minimal focus on individual work. In order to insure that faculty at the school could teach more casework and that supervisors in the field could support that focus in training social work students, their school would like our faculty to provide casework training.

Goal two: identify short and long range plans to initiate an exchange for summer of 2000.

Since the training would be emphasized for both school faculty and field supervisors, the economics of how this could be provided would be a barrier. The use of Long Distance Learning was viewed as one possibility that could insure a more sustained endeavor over time. Faculty at SDSU could teach some casework content over a series of long-distance classes to both their faculty and field supervisors. Due to the Language need, only faculty who could teach in Spanish would be able to provide this service.

The question would be how many sessions would be needed and if and how a faculty person could be compensated for this kind of time investment. There is one Spanish-speaking faculty that teaches casework, Dr. Concha Barrio, who is interested in this endeavor if the time investment is not overwhelming. (She is a new faculty who must publish for tenure)

Therefore, a short-term goal is for Monterrey to investigate if their University could set up long distance for this type of endeavor. They were not sure the kind or range of long-distance resources their University had and were going to investigate this. The other economic issue is how much long-distance teaching from SDSU would cost our University and where would the resources come from to support this expense? Thus for SDSU, long distance teaching would be a long-term goal if it is determined that long-distance is viable on the Mexican campus. In going to Mexico, it was not anticipated that this kind

of teaching would be a potential exchange goal. However, if it is packaged in a viable way as part of an exchange format, it might provide some excellent conduits for both faculty and student learning.

It may be possible, for example, that prior to actual visits, that faculty/students hold meetings via satellite to discuss their needs and to plan for the exchange in a face to face context.

Goal Three: to identify the goals the Mexican School would like to develop.

As evidenced in their discussions their primary goal is to teach their faculty and supervisors social work casework. This could include having faculty/supervisors come to San Diego and visit/shadow Spanish-speaking social workers in agencies that are used to train social work students. This would give them an overview of the kinds of casework we teach in the field and could offer a baseline on which other teaching models could be designed and implemented for their training.

Goal Four: to detail the initial goals for SDSU School of Social Work. One goal would be to recruit Spanish-speaking faculty and Spanish-speaking students to participate in a 2 week visit to Monterrey to a) examine their curriculum, and b) to use two way mirrors and other mechanisms to learn about the culturally viable devices they use in family and group support services. Also, c) a dialogue with their students and faculty about their community interventions would help to support the community aspect of generalist practice we teach in our first year at SDSU.

Subgoal a) In terms of agency identification, three agencies that serve families and youth, as well as the elderly were identified as potential shadowing sites. In dialogues more specific sites can be sought for potential visitation if four to five students were to stay for two weeks in Monterrey. During my visit at their school and the three field agencies I visited I identified the following possibilities: All three field sites, Center for Drug Abuse for Juveniles (Centros de Integracion Juvenil), Insen, (the center for services to the elderly), and the 3rd site which was a multidisciplinary center to address family violence, especially spousal, (Centro de Atencion a Victimas de Delitos) demonstrated that their model of service delivery contained aspects of culturally driven service delivery that could teach SDSU faculty and students how to serve Latino families in a more effective fashion. The drug site had a one way mirror that would facilitate students/faculty viewing how their staff facilitate family and support groups. Therefore, these could be sites for SDSU student visitations (shadowing) for the summer or year 2000, since they provide the culturally driven models that could contribute to the practice base of SDSU faculty and students as part of an exchange.

Also under goal 4 was the subgoal b) of identifying if host families would be interested in providing living accommodations to each of the SDSU faculty/students for their visits. The Social Work Director indicated they would recruit students from their school as the host family sites and this would not be problematical.

An additional component under goal 4 c) was to identify historical, cultural, social and recreational experiences that could be used during a site visit to enhance the cultural and sociopolitical atmosphere for faculty/student learning.

1. This was accomplished by visiting the various cultural/political sites in Monterrey that were recommended by the social work faculty. Since Monterrey is the state capital, all the institutions of state government are in walking distance in the MacroPlaza, located in a central area of downtown. The Governor's residence is one block away from the Department of Justice, and Department of Human Services.

2. Another example of services to the elderly was the biweekly morning dances that are extended to all members of the third age (terced edad) or those from 60+ years. Close to the MacroPlaza under an open-air state building, at least 400 elderly and also those middle-aged dance to a 45 piece band. Since this orchestra is the official City orchestra, one of its duties is to play on Tuesday and Sunday mornings for two hours for this senior endeavor that is free. The goal is to offer a forum for physical exercise and social interaction. It is situated across the street from a church and from a cafeteria where seniors can attend additional service functions quite readily either before or after their dance experience.

Not only does this site demonstrate how services for the elderly are planned and implemented, but it offers visitors a sense of the cultural context in which these citizens participated.

3. Another site that is a cultural/service domain that would contribute to student/faculty learning is the **Plaza that is downtown**, which houses the major Senior Citizen eligibility and service site, INSEN. On Sundays, this plaza is also the central area where families congregate for free entertainment and picnic experiences.

4. Similar to this Plaza is a **smaller Plaza** located in the center of the major hotels in Downtown, which fronts the Colonial House of the Governor that is now an art museum. During the evening and especially on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons, there is live classical music presentations, modern singers and dancers. Families and tourists are provided additional seating to participate in this free entertainment; another example of the cultural context in which services are planned for their citizenry.

5. Also in the MacroPlaza two blocks from the Hotel complex is the **Marco Art Gallery** which is a museum of modern art, and on my visit displayed a Chinese art exhibit, part of which is stationed in San Francisco. The gallery also offered modern Mexican art exhibitions. The Colonial House of the Governor is another central gallery that provides a smaller exhibit of Mexican art, both traditional and modern. There is a Mexican Historical Art gallery across town and a Mexican Glass Gallery that is similarly in another area of Monterrey that would offer visitors the cultural/historical and situational contexts for comprehending Mexican culture.

6. For exchange students/faculty there are two recreational sites in particular that are noteworthy: The Falls or Cola de Caballo, are located in a forest one hour from Monterrey. Cost of trip is \$10.00 by tourist bus. There is a fascinating Cavern trip, 45 minutes from Monterrey, Grutas de Garcia also \$10.00 by tourist bus, that provides an hour tour through caverns that are great examples of stalagmite and stalactite formations.

For the last subgoal d), of identifying key representatives to support this exchange, the dialogue with the Director of the Social Work program and the Director of the Doctoral Exchange Program was viewed as the key university representatives needed for this exchange.

The Director of the Doctoral Program has also served as faculty and provided that perspective, especially related to curriculum and providing information on classes and course content. Since this was downtime for both students and faculty, other connections were not made due to their unavailability. The three agency directors/staff indicated their interest in supporting our effort. Thus, it was felt that this goal was achieved although it would have been more informative to speak to other faculty/students.

SUMMARY:

This School site in Monterrey provides the visitor with the experience of a Mexican city that is not oriented to Tourism, but focused on Industry. Monterrey is the business seat of Mexico, where the Bolsa or Stock Market is situated (like in New York), and where there is a growing international business exchange. It has the highest per capita income of any state in Mexico and provides the visitor with a unique view of Mexico. There is a burgeoning middle class that could offer another view of culture/class differences that could educate SDSU faculty/students.

This University offers the only graduate school of social work that presently exists in Mexico. U.S. schools tend to include community as a subset of focus within Generalist Practice whereas this Mexican school concentrates on Community practice as the core of both practice and research endeavors. The differences in curriculum foci provide the potential of learning from each school's strengths, the focus on Community from the Mexican school, and the focus on direct practice or casework at the SDSU school.

This school has an exchange program with the University of Texas, @ Arlington, that provides a doctoral degree for bilingual students from each program. Thus they already have experience with exchange programs. They would like to upgrade their teaching and training of social work students in casework practice. For their school, the exchange would include providing training to their faculty/field supervisors in casework, although their students and faculty would also readily benefit from visiting San Diego to examine our curriculum format and experience how students are trained in the field.

The three agencies visited offer services that could easily provide SDSU faculty and students models of intervention that are culturally driven that would enhance their ability to service Latino clients, families and communities in the U.S.

The main barrier is how to package the exchange so that economic issues are addressed, perhaps through the development of funding resources from a third party, or the writing of a proposal, etc.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. If there is an exchange, it will be necessary that faculty/students be Spanish-speaking since all courses and services are only provided in Spanish. If students/faculty came to San Diego, Spanish-speaking service providers would need to be identified (and this is quite possible since Dr. Zuniga has ties to most graduates of the program who are Spanish speaking and in San Diego).
2. In order for SDSU faculty/students to travel, money would need to be allocated for transportation. Since visitors could stay with Mexican families, accomodation expenses would be minimal.
3. If Mexican faculty/students came to San Diego, they need time to plan for this so they could raise funds for travel expenses, which they felt they could do. Ninety percent of their students receive scholarships to attend school full time so that income, while sparse, could be saved for this kind of endeavor.
4. One additional resource that could be called upon to protect the time of the SDSU Spanish-speaking faculty would be to ask SDSU field supervisors who are Spanish-speaking as well as those with specialities in alcoholism, mental health, to provide a one time service presentation via Satellite on a pro bono basis, contributing to the casework training the the Mexican School is requesting.
5. Accomodations for the Mexican students and faculty could be provided by the growing alumni of Spanish speaking social workers who have graduated from SDSU and participated in the SDSU Latino Social Work Network, which has as one of it's goals, exchanges with Mexican social workers.
6. Another format would be to have a SDSU Spanish speaking faculty person like Dr. Concha Barrios visit Monterrey to provide training to their faculty/supervisors. The expense for this trip would need to be covered by some kind of arrangement with their school or through a funding source. Perhaps this could be designed as part of a training package that could be developed over time.
7. A short-term goal would be to identify funding resources that would support the initial exchanges so as to determine if long-term exchanges are viable.

Dr. Harbert, the School of Social Work Director, will be asked to allow me to use part of the October faculty meeting to provide a slide presentation on my visit and contacts with the School of Social Work in Monterrey. This would help to refine our goals and interest and may facilitate further investigation of other exchange content.