

# Director hopes to settle boycott

By MATTHEW WAITE  
Senior Reporter

A resolution for the Mexican American Student Association's two-year boycott of the Multi-Cultural Affairs office may get a much needed boost with the arrival of a new affirmative action director.

Ricardo Garcia, who will start his duties as assistant to the chancellor and director of affirmative action and diversity Tuesday, said he promised to do all he could to bring about a settlement of the boycott.

MASA is boycotting Multi-Cultural Affairs for what it calls unfair hiring practices within the office. MASA also lists an atmosphere unfriendly to Hispanics and Latinos.

They were dissatisfied with the Latino education specialist, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

James Griesen and Multi-Cultural Affairs Director Jimmi Smith.

The boycott, which started Feb. 3, 1994, has been marked by meetings, mediations and protests.

MASA has made progress over the years, but key issues remain, including the pending selection of an assistant director to the minority assistance program.

Chandra Diaz, president of MASA, said Wednesday that MASA's boycott would continue, but Garcia has given the group a morale boost.

"Our optimism in this institution is very low," Diaz said. "Hopefully through him, things can change."

Diaz spoke with Garcia when he was interviewing for his new position, and she said that he promised he would try to help end the boycott.

His role would be as an arbitrator.

Garcia, who is still at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, said Wednesday that he admired MASA for peacefully protesting what they considered an injustice.

"They are being orderly, and they are doing it the right way," he said.

Garcia said his role, however, would be limited.

"Ultimately this has to be resolved by the students and Multi-Cultural Affairs," he said.

Garcia said resolving things from the top was only a temporary fix.

"We have to get a dialogue going that gets something done," he said. "I would promise that's what I would do."

I can't promise we'd get the problem done overnight."

# Director selections arrive with different backgrounds

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Sheppard, on the other hand, has taken a variety of career paths and has migrated across the United States from Delaware to the Florida Keys and points in between.

She has been an attorney, owner and operator of a charter sailboat and a theater director and opera house president.

Sheppard, who also is not married, received her bachelor of science degree in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1968, a juris doctorate from George Washington University, and a master of fine arts in theater management from Florida State University in 1985.

After practicing law for 10 years, Sheppard took a 180-degree turn from an attorney to a performing arts planner, eventually becoming an opera

house president.

Sheppard approved of the Lied Center's programming for the last few years, saying that she booked the same events at her venues.

Sheppard's philosophy on programming is to wait and watch.

"When you move to a community, you need to figure out what works," she said.

A search committee narrowed the selection down to two candidates in late summer. The job has been handled by different university administrators since the resignation of Director Bruce Marquis last spring.

Marquis left after 19 months as director, saying his programming goals were not "closely attuned" with those of the community. Larry Lusk, dean emeritus of the College of Fine and Performing Arts, is the acting director of the Lied Center.

# Garcia to assume affirmative action post

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Shifting the emphasis from compliance to promotion and decentralizing affirmative action are completely different ways of looking at affirmative action, Garcia said. He said those unique viewpoints are what got him the job.

"I was bothered by some

people's perceptions of these children, who were all good people," he said. "I was very bothered by this whole idea that some people stigmatize others and hold them in their place with that."

From that point on, Garcia pursued questions of how people perceive each other — not only dealing with race, but with sex, gender

and class.

But his ideas will take time. Garcia cited the story of Don Quixote, who struck out to right all the world's wrongs. The character died disillusioned.

"What I said will take 30 to 40 years," he said. "What I would like to do is get people started looking differently at diversity."



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