

## Speaker urges minority students to persevere

By Alex Seise

Councilman Manuel Segura was the keynote speaker at the 12th annual Minority Achievement Conference sponsored by Chi Upsilon Sigma.

Segura's speech centered on his own personal achievements. He also urged minority students to work hard and persevere.

"People have this perception that when you have an accent, you are dumb or stupid," he said. "Ignorance is the worst enemy of humankind."

The speech also focused on women and included several jokes in which Segura praised their work. "I have found that nobody works better than a woman. And that is a fact. I have worked with men and they have not done the same job," Segura said. "A woman touches something and it turns into gold."

Segura told several personal accounts of discrimination that he had faced. In one story, he talked about his proficiency in the craft of metalworking and how one of his professors insisted that would be his profession despite his interests in other fields. In another, Segura told of how he was initially forbidden from playing in centerfield on a baseball team. He then showed the coach his throwing skills and was quickly given the position.

Segura highlighted communication as "the greatest gift God gave to mankind." He said that his daughter, an aspiring singer, was able to intimidate professional singers with her presence, positive attitude and sense of respect.

"If you address people with a lot of respect, people will listen to you," he said.

Segura ended by urging students to follow their dreams. "Do not let anybody stop your dream. Do not let anyone (make you) stumble or create roadblocks for you - jump over them. Your dream is not the American dream; it is yourself. Walk this path with respect and you will succeed and at the end of the day, follow your dream."

Following his speech, Segura was presented with a certificate of appreciation from members of Chi Upsilon Sigma.

Marilyn Pantoja, conference coordinator and president of the Delta Chapter of Chi Upsilon Sigma, said that the conference has evolved over the past twelve years.

"The conference started as the Minority Women's Conference, but it is now focused on a broader range (of students)," Pantoja, a junior nursing major, said.

She added that it was difficult to assemble the conference, saying, "It was tough to get the conference together. It carries a legacy of excellence." Pantoja also noted that the turnout was not as high as expected and that timing delays added to the confusion. She said that part of the problem was that the sorority members are all in their first year with Chi Upsilon Sigma.

The conference also featured a bone marrow drive.

Matches with people of color are much more scarce because there are fewer people of color on the registry. We need to help the community."