Abstract

The National HEPCAMP Association evolved from a need to represent The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). These unique programs were experiencing a gap in representation on a national level. They serve and assist migrant and seasonal farmworkers traveling across The United States of America via the main “streams” for the farm working communities while following the harvest seasons of agricultural products. Oral history of this association may inform our understanding of the times when these nascent programs were developing a sense of identity within the country, as well as their local communities from 1967 to the present day. In this interview, Dr. Campa discusses his time as a new Director for The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in Colorado at The University of Colorado – Boulder and at Metropolitan State University of Denver. His responses shed light on common themes among professionals involved in this work. Some of those themes are the consistent and stabilizing funding arrangements many programs seek, the experimentation of the non-residential model for HEP projects (which seems to be the standard now), and the level of involvement and activism that project Directors for both programs were required to provide as the idea of The National HEPCAMP Association was becoming incorporated.

Key Words: Migrant Education Program, College Assistance Migrant Program, High School Equivalency Program

Introduction

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Oral history of this association may inform our understanding of the times when these nascent programs were developing a sense of identity within the country, as well as their local communities from 1967 to the present day. In this interview, Dr. Campa discusses his time as a new Director for The High School Equivalency Program (HEP) in Colorado at The University of Colorado – Boulder and at Metropolitan State University of Denver. His responses shed light on common themes among professionals involved in this work. Some of those themes are the consistent and stabilizing funding arrangements many programs seek, the experimentation of the non-residential model for HEP projects (which seems to be the standard now), and the level of involvement and activism that project Directors for both programs were required to provide as the idea of The National HEPCAMP Association was becoming incorporated.
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Michael Heim: Thank you for taking a moment to help me start collecting some information and context for historical data for The National HEPCAMP association. One of the hopes I have for this work is that we can revisit interviews, like this one, for future research topics. So, the point of departure will be to discover how members of The National HEPCAMP Association got into Migrant Education.

Campa: What happened is, that during the late spring, or early May of 1981, I had a chance encounter with members of the multicultural Center in the School of Education at the University of Colorado in Boulder. They told me that if I would be interested in writing a proposal for the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), I would be appointed as the Director. So, I went over to the Center and met with the proposal writer that they had at the time – I think his name was Dave. We looked at the RFP, the Request For Proposal, and started to work on it.

Dave was an experienced proposal writer and this was my first attempt at writing a proposal, so from there we spent about a week writing the proposal. I concentrated on the budget and the more financial aspect of the RFP. Then we sent it in. Come about, maybe October, we were notified after the October 1 beginning date at that time, (being late was very typical of the US Department of Ed) it was funded. Now, there was some shuffling around about, apparently, there was someone in the Center that wanted somebody else to be Director. But, the members of the staff said “No”, I had been made a deal, so I was made Director.

Now, we started out on a different model. This was the first year that the US Department of Education took over the HEPCAMP programs from the US Department of Labor. We developed a satellite model, rather than have the residency programs in a given college or university. We decided to have satellites throughout the state of Colorado and other community colleges, or regional colleges. We started out with centers in Alamosa, CO, in Lamar, CO and up north in Sterling, CO. Then, we based the model on having a local instructor and administrator for each site, and of course, staffed with another instructor and support staff. After the first year, of course, this was in the days when we start out with one-year proposals. Under that system, you are already established into your program when you have to think about writing the next year’s proposal. So, it was a little rushed in the beginning.

We did well, though. Our productivity was essentially two to three times beyond other HEP programs nationwide, because with satellite models we were able to enroll greater numbers of HEP students. So, our enrollment numbers really went up. We were told at the time, I think it was Mary Suazo, who was the associate director of Migrant Education, that our model wouldn’t work. Well, we disproved them wrong. And, after the first, second, third year, other national programs began adopting the same model – a satellite model by having different sites at different places, and a non-residency program.

OK, so this was an innovative approach that you guys had at the time?

Campa: Yes it was. It was a different approach. Because of the non-residency aspect we were able to have just the day-time program and enroll much
greater numbers of students. Of course, [we] put the centers where the clusters of migrant and seasonal, mainly seasonal farmworkers were located in the state of Colorado. Those were the early years.

We missed one year of funding, I believe, that was 1982 to 1983. After 1983 we were able to maintain our stability in the programs. About 1985 is when we were pushing for a HEPCAMP association. At that time, we were the only HEPCAMP program around. Now, prior to 1981 there was a CAMP program at Adams State College in Alamosa, but that program was defunded during the same year, the very semester we began our program. So really, I had no guidance for this program at all from anybody in the state of Colorado. Yes, we had Migrant Education in K12, but we didn’t really have any one else to consult with or to meet with. At that time, there was only about six CAMP programs nationwide. It was a very small program. There were about thirteen HEPs. Given the size of the number of programs, when we had our annual meetings, usually in conjunction with NASDME\(^6\), the National Migrant Education Conference. We were very small potatoes in terms of the entire Migrant Education programs nationwide.

The important thing during the 80’s of course was changing our funding to a three-year basis to give more stability to the programs. Because anytime you have just an annual program, it is hard to find staff willing to take a risk just to be hired for one year. So, we based our model on the TRiO programs in 1985-86. We met in the HEPCAMP association with members of the TRiO program in Washington D.C. in order to figure out how we would draw up the plans to request a three-year program and we were successful in getting that established.

**Did you begin to experience the programmatic stability you were hoping to achieve with the 3-year funding model?**

Campa: From about 1985, and then after that of course, having more stability with the funding we were able to increase the funding. We had good support in congress. We had senators, in Senator Edward Kennedy, we had another in the state of Michigan, we had strong senatorial support. In the state of Texas, as well, we had congressional and senatorial support. We were able to gain the support of increasing funding for the HEPCAMP association. Well, that is, for the number of programs that were funded.

Now, in about 1992 is when we were able to effect a five-year program. We had it extended to five-year programs, which gave added stability to HEPCAMP programs. So, from 1981-1993, I was at the University of Colorado at Boulder in the Multicultural Center. That was our home base. We had the HEP programs at that time.

What happened was about 1990, I wrote my first CAMP grant with the assistance of a colleague and we got that funded. However at that time in 1990, CAMP was only three-year funding. We established the program at the University of Colorado at Boulder campus. However, the problem was that we ran into a lot of racism and other difficulties. You know, from the students on campus. It wasn’t a very pleasant experience for our students.

So, I left the University of Colorado. I resigned at the University of Colorado, in order to go to Metropolitan State University of Denver. I thought that this would be a much more appropriate site for our programs. And of course, it was because the ethnic diversity at Metro state is about three to four times than at CU-Boulder; which is a flagship institution, but [the student body] was mainly white. At Metro State we were able to flourish.
Our program flourished there on campus because of the ethnic composition – it’s about 40% of the student body, and of course it is an urban university in the center of downtown Denver. That had its requisite advantages in order for students to study there at the university. Ever since we started in 1999, the problem is that when I went over to Metro I couldn’t carry my programs from CU Boulder. And with the points for prior performance it was really hard to get established. In 1999 we sat down and wrote another grant, and we did get it funded. OK, so, since 1999 we have run through the present day with our programs.

**How many students were you serving through these programs when you started?**

Campa: I think we started with 25 students and have since expanded to 37-40 students, since that time. We did not have a residency program, unlike most CAMPs. Metropolitan State University, does not have dormitories. It’s a mainly urban university, and as I mentioned it has a high percentage of ethnic diversity. At the same time it has an age difference where the average student was anywhere from 26-28 years of age. Compared to Boulder where it was right out of high school for undergraduates.

We were able to maintain and support our students, and of course, the cost of tuition at Metro State is the most reasonable four-year institution in the state of Colorado. It was more affordable, and at the time it was open enrollment, though that has been modified. We were able to enroll our students easier and the fact that they were able to accommodate themselves to the life in classes and the college culture much more easily than the problems we had at Boulder. I understand that the program at Boulder expanded into satellite programs and moved CAMP off campus to avoid those racial difficulties that they had.

So, we have continued the program at Metro State to the present day.

**One thing that I feel would be interesting to cover, and I would like to get your perspective on this, is that there were obviously some HEP and some CAMP programs before ‘81. So, what was it like during the shift in funding sources from the Department of Labor over to the Department of Education?**

Campa: Well, under the Department of Labor, when they had the funding in 1970, a certain number of programs were funded. There were no open applications for other programs. It was a set number of programs and unless any of those programs folded, there were no new applications allowed at the time. When the Department of Education took the application process over, they opened it up for new applications. That was the main thing that allowed new programs to come in. It was a more competitive funding process compared to the Department of Labor. What that did was to open up the whole area of HEPCAMP for new programs to become funded. The fact is that you now had a track record, and unless you lived up to your goals and objectives, you weren’t going to be continually funded, like under the Department of Labor.

**How many people contributed to HEPCAMP in Colorado? Because you did mention that you did not have much support and you were doing this on your own to get the grants funded and the programs running.**

Campa: We didn’t have any real guidance in Migrant Education. Yes, you had your K12 programs, that were being established, but they really didn’t impact us. We were on our own. We were able to contact some of the given Directors of other programs; other HEP programs, for example. We got some guidance from
the Department of Education. Although I must say, in the beginning it was not very helpful. We certainly proved them wrong in a short time by our productivity and by the number of graduates from the HEP program. We basically developed our own model and we evolved without a whole lot of assistance from the outside. It was one of those situations where we got a new program, designed the model, established the model, even with the given circumstances at each of the outside sites; be it at Alamosa, Lamar, or up north in Sterling.

Later on, we developed into five different sites with some other sub sites in other locations where we could have additional programs. The program expanded more and more despite the circumstances. We withdrew from part of the northern sites because the local junior colleges weren’t supportive of our programs. Generally, it was a situation where if there wasn’t a high ethnic enrollment, the local staff didn’t understand the needs and dynamics, culturally and logistically speaking, for our migratory and seasonal farm worker students who often enter as first-generation into college. However, in the southern part of the state, where the higher concentrated pockets of the Latino population are, we were able to flourish in those areas. Even to this day, that program is still going.

It’s great to hear that the programs in existence today grow out of the efforts from the ‘80’s. Can you speak a little bit about 1985, you said, when the HEPCAMP association began to be conceptualized and formed. How was that processed and who was involved? Campa: None of those members are present today. However, the idea was that we looked at expanding, the main focus was expanding the number of years, funding years, from one to three years. And what we did was, as the HEPCAMP Association, we decided to consult with the TRiO programs, which had a much longer track record than we did. How they developed their model into three years and what kind of support and the people, congressional people, were needed in order to gain their support so we could increase the funding base. There was a lot of consultation within the HEPCAMP Association about how to do this.

We sent a team of us to Washington in order to consult, develop and gain information from these different people, from TRiO programs, to congressional support to see if they would support for moving to a three-year model. I remember working with individuals like Larry Rincones from down south from The University of Texas – Pan American. Unfortunately, I can’t remember the names of all the individuals.

So, you the association as a group ended up going to Washington and consulted for programs funded on three-year cycles. Campa: We consulted with different Congressional members, and members of TRiO programs and anyone else that could give us advice on how to gain an expanded funding base, and of course the people that could support us in such a move.

So, this wasn’t lobbying. This was a group of people that were advocating for an extension of the programming and funding. Campa: No, this was not lobbying. And I would be very thoughtful about language related to lobbying. But at the same time to gain the experience and the means on how to affect this increased funding. How to go about and do it, in other words. That was instrumental at the time. The focus was that we’ve got to expand from one-year programs to three-year programs. You can’t effectively run a single-year program when you’ve got to start writing a new proposal right away. And, at the time, they were telling us that you can’t
use company time to write a grant proposal. Well, how are you going to write a proposal? By spending all your evening hours and weekends writing a proposal?

*That timeframe for writing a new proposal while running a successful program seems to have been very narrow compared to today’s standards where programs are now funded for five year cycles. If I can go back to the HEPCAMP association itself, when do you remember the HEPCAMP Association come to fruition, when did it become a reality?*

Campa: It started informally with our first meetings, because while attending NASDME annual conferences we soon realized that we were the just considered the lost or step children of Migrant Education. The Directors of NASDME, at the time, really did not pay much attention to us and we were an afterthought. We began to see that in order to gain some clout and in order to really gain some recognition we would have to form our own organization. So, that began at about that time, for survival. We weren’t really getting a lot of support, direct support from NASDME at the time, you know, being such a small group of individuals. That’s how we began forming our own organization with the purpose of gaining some clout and recognition for what we were doing.

I only held one office, I was the parliamentarian during the mid-80’s. The problem with me serving in the association was that I had many other responsibilities that I was doing in the multicultural center. I soon became Director of about three to four different programs. Not only did I have HEP, but I had other Title VII programs and university academic programs. So, I was quite busy at the time and solely being supported by soft money. I had to write proposals in order to maintain my own professional stability. And that’s a good reason why I also left CU, to get a tenure track position at Metro State.

At any rate, I was active. But after 1993, I was less active because I began as a tenure track professor in Anthropology, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, when I was accepted. It wasn’t until, 1993-1999 when I was not directly involved with Migrant Education, because we were not able to get a program funded. And of course, with points for prior performance, it makes it very hard to gain entry into the field of HEPCAMP programs. So, by 1999 I was able to maintain a 50% time commitment as Director and PI. That generally evolved into Co-PI and Director. Then in 2008 when I was appointed the Associate Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, that time commitment diminished to only 5% as a Co-PI. So, I became less involved, nevertheless, I remained as involved as I could, in Migrant Ed.

I attended National Migrant Education meetings. And I had a say in the oversight of the program [in Colorado]. I never lost contact, even though I had other duties. Of course, becoming an Administrator was extremely busy. However, my interest in CAMP at that time never diminished. For example, even though I am retired, as of July 2017, I am maintaining a small percentage of time associate with CAMP through university funding to maintain visibility and involvement with the CAMP program at this time. I’m mainly looking for funding sources that will assist our students once they achieve sophomore status.

*I think that’s a shared experience with people that work in HEPCAMP. They leave, but they never truly and completely separate form their work with migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Now, HEPCAMP seems like a very unified and united organization. Many people have stayed involved these particular*
Migrant Ed programs for a considerable amount of time, so there are some good relationships that have been built. What was the experience of moving in and out of an association with tight relationships between the members like?

Campa: Well, in the very beginning of the HEPCAMP association in the 80’s there was a much smaller, closer knit group where we had to work together because we were very small and we wanted to maintain visibility, and for funding sources and seeking support. So, we were more actively...well, given the small number of people, most of us were involved in one way or another. Perhaps today because of the greater numbers of the programs you don’t find people involved as much. So, being a smaller organization meant you had to participate and do something if you wanted to see the survival of the organization and the maintenance of HEP CAMP funding in the long run. In that respect it was tighter it was more involved compared to today because we have much larger numbers. And, perhaps, not as many people are closely involved as we were in those days.

OK. That brings up something, in my mind, about the continuation, or the starting point, within the civil rights movement for developing these programs, and then continuing them forward to bridge the gaps of marginalization for our Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers. Do you still see that these programs are a continuation of those efforts coming out of the Civil Rights movement from those leaders and how that helps the farm workers?

Campa: I think that there is less identity with that as we move forward more and more since the 1964 implementation of the Civil Rights Act. Whereas many people don’t identify it because they are now involved with the programs and were born way beyond that time than my generation, who were actively involved.

And, it’s not necessarily identified with that perhaps because many people aren’t all that familiar with the Civil Rights Act at this point. Nevertheless, I think that we have maintained support and are enhancing the future of migratory and seasonal farm workers. Many people believe in that aspect. This provides the open door for education for this population, and in many cases they wouldn’t have the opportunity. So I think, from the standpoint of advancing the future and educational goals of migratory and seasonal farm workers, that aspect has been cohesive for the organization. Like I say, I don’t know how many people still identify it as coming out of the Civil Rights Act, or the Johnson era, where they had the war on poverty and other associated programs, or that this HEPCAMP Association kind of grew out of that legacy. So, many people, perhaps, aren’t familiar with that, quite frankly.

As you say, there was a small group of people working with the HEP and CAMP projects in the beginning due to the number of grants available. Also, there was a beginning point where the current All right, so continuing it was the vitality of the program...

Campa: Well, the vitality of the program has continued and, overall. I think that our programs have lived up to their goals and objectives. I think that this also became instrumental in 1986 as they did the national study on the effects of HEPCAMP programs. California State-Fresno developed this national study out of a grant that they got from NASDME in order to measure the pre- and post- effects of enrollment in HEP and CAMP overall. In other words, taking an assessment of pre-graduate of the pre-entry of the programs and the post-graduate period of both HEP and CAMP we were able to measure the effects of job availability, income, tax paying ability, a whole host of things. In other
words, how did it improve the lives of the students enrolled in these programs? The thing that caught the ear of the congressional people was the tax paying ability of HEPCAMP students multiplied by a factor of three and a half times from pre- to post. That is what caught the ear of many congressional representative: the fact that they became tax-paying citizens, and because of that monetary aspect, the contribution to American society seemed to be the thing that caught how these programs are improving the lives of the students. In other words, they are cost effective programs because of the effects that they are contributing to American society, to the economy. That was interesting and caught [our attention], too.

I was one of the field researchers, and each of us that were brought in as a field researcher were given a number of programs to go in and interview students, staff and everything to measure the effectiveness of programs. So, we compiled our data and then we sent it in to the research program at Cal State Fresno at that time. I have the results. I have the full study. And I have a few years ago, I have sent some of those results to members of the organization because most people today aren’t even aware today that we had this national study done in 1986. We used that effectively to go and inform congressional representatives of our effectiveness it was very good, because we were able to point out that this is what our programs achieve and this is how they contribute to the economy and it’s an effective use of tax dollars to fund these programs.

I’m not sure I was ever aware of that study either. Thank you for sharing that historical information and your perspective on it. It has certainly helped my as a newer member of the HEPCAMP association to understand that legacy. I think that one of the last things that I want to try and cover with our time

together is what would be some of your hopes and ideas about how HEPCAMP can evolve and continue?

Campa: I’d like to see continuity in the programs and that were able to maintain stability of the programs and are able to complete our goals and objectives, and at the same time we can inform members of congress of what we are doing for continued support of these programs. So, it’s a multifaceted approach. That we’ve got to maintain program stability we’ve got to produce results of the programs, we’ve got to contact members of congress senators and representative for maintaining funding and the visibility of our programs. You’d be surprised. We’ve gone into a number of senatorial offices where their staffers had no idea of our programs and hear the word migrant and think “Oh, illegal immigrants or migrants”. That shows how uninformed people were about these programs. So, we’ve got to maintain the exposure of congressional members of these programs so they know what we are doing and show them this is what we are accomplishing. It takes an active participation of the members to, when they go to these national meetings, do these activities, and in fact, participate in the HEPCAMP association and at home improve visibility. One of the things that we’ve always done in our program is contact our marketing and communications division of the university so that we have visibility. People know who we are on campus. We keep the administration informed, the board of trustees and the public. As a result of some of our newspaper stories, we actually had a scholarship endowment created by somebody who saw the story of our CAMP program. We have maintained this endowment to this day for students that are graduate from CAMP and go onto their sophomore year. So, that came as a result of publicity. Contacting TV news media whatever it may be to expose your…expand your visibility and keep people informed of what you’re doing. And, of course,
one thing we have always had to be careful of, is that when people hear the word *migrant* they think “Oh, illegal immigrants” and we work to keep people informed.

**Especially on the CAMP side, and that the word *migrant* not being associated with the type of farm work that they are doing within the country.**

Campa: Yeah, that’s right. Those are the kinds of things for which we have to maintain our visibility and exposure to the public and keeping our university informed. We’ve been able to get a cash match of $50,000 from our university annually which helps our program. Of course, for our application this shows involvement from our university. We did have one lapse in funding, I mentioned from 1982. But, in 1995 we didn’t get funded because the readers criticized our program saying we were lacking some parts. Because of that, we went through the readers’ comments and found 36 errors. So, we called Washington and said, “How can you misjudge our program.” For example, one reader said we did not have an evaluation program. If anything, we have an extensive evaluation program. I don’t even think the reader read our proposal. When we went to Washington and showed them all of the errors, they agreed and said that we can apply without any hardships or without any restrictions. And we got refunded immediately. So, it shows you, Washington can make errors too. I mean, I don’t know where they got these people off the street, or something? (Laughing) It was incredible. You have to be vigilant. I don’t think the review process is a loose as it was in the 1990’s as it is now. But if we weren’t vigilant, we could have lost our funding.

**The situation that you described with the readers would definitely pose some barriers when you are trying to get refunded. Those are great insights for when programs move forward.**

Campa: And the other thing is the support of the institution. We were given $80,000 to fund us for the interim, just under a year at that time, so we were able to maintain the integrity of the program at a smaller basis. It was something like 10 students; nevertheless, we had continuity of the program, and we didn’t lose our space at the university too, which is important.

**That’s one of those areas that every program could improve upon – gaining institutions support and buy-in, right?**

Campa: You have to get institutional buy-in and support. If you don’t, you could lose your program. Or, it could be that many people don’t have any ideas of what your program is about. You know, it takes active involvement. You not only have to run your program effectively, but you’ve got to provide exposure to the public, to the news media and others. It takes active involvement to do that kind of thing. So, we’ve been promoting that and we’ve had good support from our institution. We’ve gotten visibility in publications from the university, not only in the electronic newsletter, but the quarterly magazine that they put out. We have had highlights of our staff and students. Of course, in the newspapers and news media. We call them in and invite the president to our CAMP graduation. Not only the first year graduation, but those CAMP graduates that make it through and get their BA. Maintain visibility for the administration, too. It’s gotten to the point that we get calls from the Provost to get updates on CAMP so that she can, and I quote, “brag about” the CAMP program. Because they recognize...another thing, too, that has been important for HSI’s is that we are an integral part of that effort. Our CAMP Director, Dr. Luis Rivas, is a member of the HSI steering committee, and we have recently achieved HSI status.
at Metropolitan State University. That’s going to open up new avenues of funding, once that becomes ratified. HSI certification at many universities is an important aspect, and members of the HEPCAMP association or our programs should become involved in those efforts too, so they can gain visibility. The fact is, that we have recruited an x number of students throughout the years, something like 800 students. We’ve admitted them the university and obviously that supported the HSI enrollment figures and to help achieve that. That’s one more avenue that you can get actively involved in and improve the university, in order to increase your visibility.

And as you approach the fifth year of the program, as with any program, you might be running low on funding and it will provide a backup for that, as well. But, keeping the visibility is up to HEPCAMP personnel to inform their universities. If the university doesn’t know about the program, then not much can be done.

Thank you.
Campa: My pleasure.
Mary L. Suazo – HEP/CAMP Specialist for the Office of Migrant Education. She was recognized for her dedicated service to the HEP and CAMP Projects through the Office of Migrant Education by the National HEPCAMP Association in Washington, D.C., 2005.

1 The National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education (NASDME). This association is comprised primarily of State Directors who oversee Migrant Education Programs (MEP) funding that is awarded through the US Department of Education – Office of Migrant Education.

1 Dr. Campa emphasized how the current program personnel at different program sites needed to gain experience and capacity to advocate for HEPCAMP programs. One of the ways they did this was by soliciting some mentorship and consultation with TRiO program representatives.

1 Dr. Arthur Campa served in this official capacity on the Association’s Board during the dates he mentioned. However, it should be noted that he did serve on The National HEPCAMP Association’s Professional Development Committee, as well. This is documented in The National HEPCAMP Association meeting minutes and notes. (Source: undated copy of “National HEP and CAMP Association Standing Committees”. (The source is a scanned copy of The National HEPCAMP document Archives, and is in interviewer’s possession)

1 During the beginning of the Clinton administration, funding for the HEP & CAMP programs was eliminated in the President’s proposed budget. On Table S-8. “Program Terminations-Continued (In millions of dollars) both HEP and CAMP projects are listed at either negative or from less than $500,000 - $0.00 (denoted on the table by an “*”). Source, The Budget Message of the President (FY 1996), 197. https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-1996-BUD/pdf/BUDGET-1996-BUD.pdf