

UWO SOCIOLOGY

Alumni Spotlight



Oscar Mireles,
Class of 1996
Executive Director,
Omega School,
Madison, WI

Oscar Mireles: I chose to study Sociology in the 1970s at UW-Oshkosh after enrolling in a self-paced "Introduction to Sociology" class taught by Dr. Peter Remender. I was so interested in the subject matter, that I ended up finishing the class (in) about six weeks...and got to know all the faculty soon afterwards and declared my Sociology major early in my sophomore year. While I took the vast majority in my college classes in the 1970s, I officially graduated in 1996.

For almost 10 years, I worked in Milwaukee...After several years of progressively challenging jobs, I became the Associate Executive Director of the Centro de la Comunidad Unida/United Community Center. During my tenure there, I helped create Cafe El Sol (a community based restaurant and catering service), Latino Arts (featuring a 200 seat theater and gallery) and Bruce Guadalupe Community School (serving over 300 students grades K-8).

Since the 1990s, I have been the Executive Director of Omega School, an adult literacy center that provides basic education and GED preparation, and assisted over 3,000 young adults with earning a GED /HSED credential in the past 21 years. I have also published three anthologies titled "I didn't know there were Latinos In Wisconsin" in 1989, 1999, and 2014...The latest Latino anthology has been selected by the Appleton Public Library as part of their "Community Reads" program and the library has purchased 50 copies for residents to check out. Madison Metropolitan School District awarded me with the Community Service award in 2009, State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tony Evers nominated me for the "Friend of Education " award in 2012 and Urban League of Greater Madison presented me with the "Community Impact Award" in 2014.

My sociology background has helped in all facets of my work life. In my current position, 80% (of students) are not employed full-time and many struggle with many other issues such as teen pregnancy, drugs, mental health and other challenges. I believe I have the skill sets and cultural competencies to provide the most appropriate academic and social supports our students need. My advice to students would be to follow your passions. I honestly believe that this work was my life's mission—assist young adults as they transition to the next phase of their lives.

