

# **SERA-37 New Hispanic South Proposal**

## **I. Title**

The New Hispanic South: Strengthening the Capacity of the Region's Land-Grant University System to Respond

## **II. Statement of Issues and Justification**

The South has experienced significant economic prosperity and associated population growth since the beginning of the 1990s. Southern states such as North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, for example, have shifted their economies from primarily manufacturing to a more diverse and complex economic base. In some locations, agriculture, manufacturing, and construction have witnessed increases. In other places, traditional industries have been replaced or supplemented by growth in service and information industries. These economic shifts, with a marked increase in job opportunities, have turned the South into a favored destination for both national and international migration (Parrado and Kandel, 2006; Passel and Suro, 2005).

The southern U.S. has the most rapidly growing Hispanic population in the nation. States such as North Carolina (394%), Arkansas (337%) Georgia (300%), Tennessee (278%), South Carolina (211%) and Alabama (208%) have experienced substantial Hispanic population increases between 1990 and 2000. It appears that this pattern of rapid growth is continuing and is now extending to other southern states.

What do these demographic trends imply for urban and rural areas of the South? The following offer a glimpse of the important challenges facing the region:

- A recent report on “The New Latino South” by the Pew Hispanic Center notes that the expansion of job opportunities in the South’s meat processing, construction, landscaping, forestry and furniture manufacturing industries is serving as a magnet for Hispanic immigrants into the region (Kochlar et al., 2005).
- Unlike past trends, Hispanic immigrations are migrating to non-traditional Hispanic destinations. That is, Hispanic growth is occurring in urban and rural locales that have had limited past experiences understanding and responding to the impacts of Hispanic immigrants into their communities. As a result, Hispanic immigrants are often finding themselves moving to places with no established Hispanic neighborhoods to serve as socialization and transition points into American society and economy. Furthermore, they are facing obstacles such as strong resistance from longtime residents, substandard housing, low wages, and minimal access to basic services such as health care (Fluharty, 2002; Neal and Bohon, 2003).
- The rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the South is creating difficulties for Hispanic parents who want to gain access to school, health, and other community services for their children. At the same time, the rapid expansion of immigrant children into the region is taxing the capacity of educators, agency administrators, social workers,

health care providers, and others to meet the educational, social, and health-related needs of these children and their families.

- Studies show that that community contexts have a strong link with key outcomes for Hispanic children, such as child adjustment, health, and psychosocial development (McLaughlin et al., 2002; Pachter et al., 2006; Sastry and Pebley, 2003). Thus, embedding Hispanic children in a positive neighborhood or community milieu can pay important dividends for their long-term well being (Galster and Killen, 1995).

The new SERA being requested in this proposal is designed to mobilize a critical mass of land-grant faculty to: (1) work collaboratively in understanding the challenges and opportunities associated with the “new Hispanic South”; (2) to strengthen the research, Extension outreach, and public policy work being done on the new Hispanic South by our region’s land-grant university system; and (3) advance the capacity of the region’s land-grant university system to provide timely and high quality educational programs and technical assistance activities to communities that wish to address, in a positive and strategic manner, the diverse needs of their growing Hispanic population.

### **III. Objectives**

The following are the major objectives associated with the new SERA initiative:

1. Establish and facilitate dialogue and information exchange among land-grant representatives from the South dealing with key Hispanic issues in the region. This would be achieved via regularly scheduled conference calls, annual face-to-face meetings, and web-based conferencing.
2. Catalogue the research and Extension resources existing within the region and beyond that focus on issues associated with the expanding growth of Hispanics in urban or rural areas. In addition, facilitate access by land-grant faculty in the region to this important repository of information. This would be done by creating a website that would be a portal to a variety of electronic-based research, statistical information, educational modules/products, and policy resources of value to the SERA team. The development and distribution of an electronic newsletter that provides timely updates on research, outreach, and policy products of relevance to Southern land-grant universities and- they constituents would be pursued as well.
3. Identify the existing gaps in the research and/or Extension resources that focus on important Hispanic issues in the South, and seek to mobilize land-grant faculty in the region to address these gaps.
4. Identify, analyze, and prepare a series of information briefs that profile the demographic, educational, social, and economic changes associated with the region’s Hispanic population, and outline the important implications associated with these trends. These products – which would build on the applied research being conducted by LGU faculty in the South and nation – would be distributed to land-grant administrators and faculty, leaders government leaders at all levels (local, state,

regional, and federal), community-based organizations, philanthropic groups, and other interested organizations and individuals.

5. Design and sponsor training program(s) that introduce and expand the capacity of Extension faculty in the region to work with, and deliver educational programs targeted to, the South's expanding Hispanic population. These training activities will be carried out in collaboration with the Southern Rural Development Center.

#### **IV. Expected Outcomes and Impacts**

There are a number of important outcomes and impacts that are expected as a result of the establishment of this SERA:

1. Establishment of a multi-disciplinary team of LGU research and Extension faculty in the South that exchanges ideas and information associated with the new Hispanic South;
2. Development of a web-based repository of research and educational resources for use by the SERA team and other land-grant faculty in the region (and beyond);
3. Identification of key research, education, and policy needs associated with the subject of the new Hispanic South, and communication of these needs to LGU faculty in the region (in hopes that they may address these needs via their research and/or Extension programs);
4. A network of research and Extension faculty across the region that can be quickly and efficiently respond to funding opportunities that focus on issues associated with the new Hispanic South;
5. Publication of information briefs on important dimensions of the new Hispanic South to internal and external LGU audiences;
6. The development and delivery of a multi-state curriculum and training that would help LGU faculty to better assist local communities in responding to the challenges associated with the new Hispanic South;

#### **V. Internal and External Linkages**

Two Mississippi State University-based Centers -- the Southern Rural Development Center and the Social Science Research Center -- have worked in partnership to identify and recruit land-grant faculty in the South with an interest in Hispanic-related issues. A number of faculty from across the region and beyond have been engaged in a series of conference calls to discuss a variety of issues associated with the new Hispanic South. The lion's share of these individuals has urged that the two Centers to find a formal mechanism to facilitate our multi-state working activities. The establishment of a SERA is a key mechanism for maintaining and advancing the

work of our group. A list of land-grant faculty in the South who has expressed an interest in being part of the proposed SERA is provided as an attachment in Section IX of this document.

#### Disciplines/Program Areas Being Targeted:

Individuals listed above represent a variety of disciplines and program areas. These include: agricultural economics, sociology/rural sociology, community development, leadership development, entrepreneurship/business development, human sciences, youth development, environmental sciences, natural resources, and anthropology. Others in the region with a strong interest in Hispanic-related issues in the South, and with a disciplinary or programmatic focus relevant to objectives of the SERA, will be encouraged to join the SERA. Also included in our list of proposed SERA participants are our important colleagues in CSREES/USDA.

#### Other Partners:

A number of organizations are interested, or are likely to be interested, in the proposed work of our SERA. Our team will invite, as appropriate, representatives from these organizations and institutions to be engaged in the work of our team (such as representatives of Southern LGU-based Hispanic/Latino Centers or Institutes and the Pew Hispanic Center).

### **VI. Educational Plan**

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) and the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) will work hand in hand with the SERA members to develop and disseminate information to key stakeholders. In particular, the SRDC/SSRC will help develop the SERA website and provide technical assistance in organizing information located on the site for use by LGU faculty and others. Both the SRDC and SSRC will help produce electronic-based information briefs developed by SERA members and will assist in the distribution of these products to LGU faculty, administrators, government officials, foundations, nonprofit organizations, and other interested groups/individuals. The SRDC will help organize and host multi-state training designed to improve the outreach education efforts of Extension educators targeted to Hispanics living in urban and rural areas of the South.

### **VII. Governance**

Given that this is a new SERA, the leadership of this group has not been determined. However, the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) and the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) will work in partnership to organize and host the first meeting of the new SERA. They will, during the course of the inaugural meeting of this group, facilitate the formal election of officers, namely, a Chair, Chair-elect, and Secretary. The SRDC/SSRC already have hosted face-to-face meetings and conference calls with land-grant faculty in the region with a strong interest in addressing the issues associated with the growth of Hispanics in the region. As such, it is expected that the selection of individuals willing to provide governance for this important new initiative will not be difficult.

## VIII. Attachments

List of Southern LGU Faculty by State Wishing to be Members of the Proposed SERA on the New Hispanic South

### References:

Fluharty, C.W. (2002). "Toward a community-based national rural policy: The importance of the social services sector." *Child Welfare*, 81: 663-689.

Galster, G., & S. Killen (1995). "The geography of metropolitan opportunity: A reconnaissance and conceptual framework." *Housing Policy Debate*, 6: 7-43.

Kochlar, R., R. Suro, and S. Tafoya (2005). *The New Latino South: The Context and Consequences of Rapid Population Growth*. Report from the Pew Hispanic Center, Washington, D.C.

McLaughlin, H. J., A. Liljestrom, J. H. Lim, & D. Meyers (2002). "LEARN: A community study about Latino immigrants and education." *Education and Urban Society*, 34: 212-232.

Neal, M., & S. Bohon (2003). "The Dixie diaspora: Attitudes toward immigrants in Georgia." *Sociological Spectrum*, 23: 181-212.

Pachter, L. M., P. Auinger, R. Palmer, & M. Weitzman (2006). "Do parenting and the home environment, maternal depression, neighborhood, and chronic poverty affect child behavioral problems differently in different racial-ethnic groups?" *Pediatrics*, 117: 1329-1338.

Parrado, E. A. & W. A. Kandel (2006). "New Hispanic migrant destinations: A tale of two industries." The 2006 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, Los Angeles, CA.

Passel, J. S. & R. Suro (2005). *Rise, Peak, and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992-2004*. Report from the Pew Hispanic Center, Washington, D.C.

Sastry, N., & A. R. Pebley (2003). *The Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey: Neighborhood Observation Forms and Interviewer Manual*. Report DRU-2400/6-LAFANS, Labor and Population Program, RAND.