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Spring 2007

## **Enlaces Latinos: Newsletter of the New York Latino Research and Resources Network**

New York Latino Research and Resources Network

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UNIVERSITY  
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State University of New York

# Enlaces Latinos

Newsletter of the New York Latino Research and Resources Network

## NYLARNet's Second Year Projects at Somos el Futuro



Dr. Héctor Cordero Guzmán talking about the growth of Latino owned firms from 1997 to 2002 in the states with the largest number of firms.

On April 29, 2006, NYLARNet researchers presented the findings of some of the research projects sponsored by the consortium at the 19th Somos el Futuro conference held in Albany, New York. Dr. Héctor Cordero Guzmán from Baruch College, CUNY, spoke about Latino entrepreneurship in New York; Dr. Victoria Santiago, a health policy researcher at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, CUNY, presented findings on asthma incidence among Latinos in the state. Dr. José E. Cruz reported the findings of a poll monitoring project conducted during the 2005 mayoral election in New York City. According to Cordero Guzmán, Latino entrepreneurs do not conform to the conventional wisdom about small business owners. The research by Dr. Santiago clearly showed that among Latinos in New York, Puerto Ricans are disproportionately represented among sufferers of asthma. According to Cruz, among the linguistic minority populations in New York City, Asians were provided the least amount of language services during the 2005 mayoral election. The full reports can be accessed online at [www.nylarnet.org](http://www.nylarnet.org).

## Is Latino Society and Culture Undergoing Secularization?

On March 7, 2006, the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC) held a symposium at Trinity College, in Hartford, Connecticut on the question of secularism among Latinos in the United States. Symposium commentators included Dr. Ariela Keysar, from ISSSC, Dr. Anthony Stevens-Arroyo, from Brooklyn College, CUNY; Carleen Basler, from Amherst College; Efraín Agosto, from the Hartford Seminary; and NYLARNet's director, Dr. José E. Cruz.

The basic findings of *Religious Identification Among Hispanics in the United States*, by Keysar, Barry A. Kosmin, and Egon Mayer are:

- While Catholicism is still the dominant religion among Latinos in the United States, the proportion of Latinos that are Catholic has decreased;
- The proportion of non-Catholics has remained about the same;
- The proportion of Latinos professing no-religion or identifying themselves as atheists, agnostic, or secular more than doubled from an estimated 926,000 individuals in 1990 to an estimate of almost 3 million in 2001.

The ARIS/PARAL study notes that changes within the Latino community mirror trends among the general population. Latino males are more likely than Latina females to profess no religion. Education does not seem to have much impact on the choice of no-religion. While employment correlates with higher numbers of no-religion Latinos, these are not necessarily concen-



Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture symposium, March 7, 2006. From left to right, Dr. Carleen R. Basher, Dr. José E. Cruz, Efraín Agosto.

trated among the less affluent. Regional concentrations appear to have an ecological effect. The study also finds that immigrants do not necessarily join churches at a higher rate than U.S.-born Latinos.

During the proceedings Cruz commented that the principal limitation of the study was that the Latino category obscures important differences by sub-group, a problem that the authors recognized. Nevertheless the study is important because among other things it suggests that while Latinos may be different from Anglos in socioeconomic status, political participation, and political representation, when it comes to attitudes and values there are more similarities between them than it is commonly assumed. This is important in the context of claims that as a result of transnationalism and globalization Latinos in the United States do not acculturate, that for them "exit" is a more realistic option than "voice" or "loyalty." The similarities are also important in the context of claims that Latino culture has a corrosive effect on American identity and values. In light of the ARIS/PARAL findings such claims are questionable at best.

To access the full study go to [www.trincoll.edu/secularisminstitute](http://www.trincoll.edu/secularisminstitute).

## VRA Colloquium



Juan Cartagena

On April 25, 2007 NYLARNet hosted a talk by Juan Cartagena entitled, "Puerto Ricans and the Making of the Voting Rights Act" as part of a Colloquium Series in Milne Hall 200, University at Albany Downtown Campus.

Juan Cartagena discussed the historical significance of Puerto Ricans in shaping the Voting Rights Act (VRA), as well as the events leading up to the recent reauthorization of the VRA in July, 2006.

Puerto Ricans had a significant impact on the passage of the VRA, especially Sections 4(e) and 5. Cartagena explained that Section 4(e), "was directed exclusively to benefit the Puerto Rican community" and targeted the literacy tests passed in New York State in 1921, which were knowingly used for discriminatory purposes. The English literacy tests excluded many Puerto Ricans from participating in elections leading to a court case challenging the constitutionality of the literacy tests by Mr. José Camacho in *Camacho v. Rogers*. The court case along with pressure by Puerto Rican activists resulted in the inclusion of Section 4(e) in the VRA. Cartagena explained that grassroots mobilization and litigation surrounding Section 4(e), "established the legal foundation to extend Section 5's coverage to language minority citizens in all Section 5 jurisdictions."

Cartagena concluded by emphasizing the significance of the recent reauthorization of the VRA, whilst pointing out that recent elections have shed light on contemporary voting issues. Although there have been significant landmarks for voting rights in the last fifty years, Cartagena stated, "access is far from accomplished for Latinos."

Juan Cartagena is a constitutional and civil rights attorney who is presently General Counsel at the Community Service Society (CSS) where he litigates cases on behalf of poor communities in the areas of voting rights, housing, employment, health and entitlements.

## NYLARNet goes to the University of New Mexico



From left to right, SUNY Chancellor John Ryan, Assemblyman Peter Rivera, Dr. José E. Cruz, and Assemblyman Ron Canestrari.

On May 4-6, 2006, NYLARNet's director José E. Cruz traveled to New Mexico along with SUNY Chancellor John Ryan, Tom Kriger and Raúl Huerta, from United University Professions, Assemblymen Peter Rivera (AD 76th) and Ron Canestrari (AD 106th), and Assemblyman Rivera's Legislative Director, Guillermo Martínez on a fact finding visit to the University of New Mexico (UNM). The purpose of the visit was to identify and discuss best higher educational practices that meet demographic changes in states with a strong Latino presence. The New York delegation met with faculty and administrators from UNM as well as with members of the New Mexico legislature. Participants discussed strategies to increase and retain Latino students and faculty. The New Mexico and New York legislators also shared their experiences trying to secure resources for higher education in general and to promote Latino access in particular.

As a follow up to the New Mexico trip NYLARNet director Dr. José E. Cruz and Raúl Huerta, from United University Professions Latino Affairs Committee met with Assemblymen Peter Rivera and Ron Canestrari to propose the establishment of the Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) at SUNY Central Administration to manage,

oversee, and advocate for Latino and historically underrepresented students, faculty, professionals, and clerical staff throughout SUNY. After months of discussions and negotiations OLA became OLE—Office for Learning Excellence—but the concept remained the same.

In February 2007, after opting out of the OLA/OLE proposal, SUNY Central created instead the position of Vice Provost of the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. This position, however, incorporates the mission and goals articulated in the OLA/OLE proposals. According to the vacancy announcement The Vice Provost, who will report to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, will be charged with "leading SUNY's efforts in promoting and advancing the University's diversity goals and ensuring that they are properly captured within all university policies and procedures. The Vice Provost for Diversity will provide leadership and strategic direction to all our campuses in connection with the recruitment and retention of faculty, students and administrators who come from groups within our society that are underrepresented at SUNY. The Vice Provost also will assist in the construction of the academic and support services infrastructure necessary to enable such students to successfully navigate their college experience."

On March 7, 2007 news came of the resignation of John Ryan as SUNY's Chancellor. With his departure Latino students, faculty, and staff throughout the university system lost a concerned and sympathetic academic leader. By the end of the 2007 Spring semester SUNY central had invited Professor Pedro Cabán, a political scientist, to head the office for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs as its first Vice Provost.

## Latino Studies Program at Cornell Joins NYLARNet

In May 2007, the Latino Studies Program (LSP) at Cornell University became part of NYLARNet's consortium, adding a distinguished roster of Latino studies experts to its list of faculty resources. Lobbying by professors and students for a Latino Studies Program at Cornell University began in the early 1970s. These initial efforts were not successful. During the 1980s, when Chicano and Puerto Rican studies pro-

grams were visible at other leading universities, the campaign grew stronger, emphasizing Hispanics as the organizing unit. In 1987 the Hispanic American Studies Program (HASP) came into being. HASP became part of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1995. As new faculty lines were added the name was changed to Latino Studies Program. Rather than a mere change in nomenclature the new name

reflected the widespread sentiment that the term Latino better encompassed all of the different cultures, languages, and traditions that exist within Spanish-speaking-, Spanish-, and/or Latin American-origin communities in the United States. Currently, LSP is directed by Vilma Santiago-Irizarry, Associate Professor, Latino Studies/ Anthropology. For more information go to <http://latino.lsp.cornell.edu/>

### NYLARNet's Third Year Projects, 2006-2007

An action research project to identify, recruit, and train Latina mothers in practices leading to the prevention and/or reduction of asthma attacks. The project will be carried out in Amsterdam, New York, by Dr. José Rossy.

A colloquium on the Voting Rights Act in April 2007, at the University at Albany, State University of New York.

An analysis of the cost of the achievement gap in minority education in New York by Dr. Clive Belfield, Queens College, CUNY.

An analysis of the gap in representation of Latinos in the state, by Dr. Ron Hayduk, Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY.

City Variation in the Socioeconomic Status of Latinos in New York State: An Update Based on Current Census Data, by Dr. Chris Bose, University at Albany, State University of New York.

An analysis of the effects of gentrification on a low income Puerto Rican/Latino neighborhood in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx, by Drs. James Freeman and Gil Marzan, Bronx Community College, CUNY.

An analysis of the 2006 State Governor's race, by Dr. José E. Cruz, Dr. Sally Friedman, and Wesley Nishiyama, University at Albany, State University of New York.

Publication of *Latino Immigration Policy: Context, Issues, Alternatives*. Papers presented at NYLARNet's November 3, 2006 conference on Latino Immigration Policy

### NYLARNet Papers, Reports, and Books Online

Christine E. Bose, *City Variation in the Socioeconomic Status of Latinos in New York State*.

José E. Cruz, editor, *Latino Immigration Policy: Context, Issues, Alternatives*. Papers presented at NYLARNet's Latino Immigration Policy Conference, November 3, 2006.

José E. Cruz, Cecilia Ferradino, and Sally Friedman, *Latino Voting in the 2004 Election: The Case of New York*.

Anthony De Jesús and Daniel W. Vasquez, *Exploring the Education Profile and Pipeline for Latinos in New York State*.

NALEO, *A Report on Accessibility of Polling Places in the November 2005 Election: The Experience of New York Voters*.

Felipe Pimentel, *The Decline of Puerto Rican Full-Time Faculty at the City University of New York (CUNY) from 1981-2002*.

Carlos Vargas Ramos, *The State of Housing for Hispanics in the United States*.

**TO ACCESS OR PURCHASE NYLARNET'S PUBLICATIONS GO TO [WWW.NYLARNET.ORG](http://WWW.NYLARNET.ORG)**

## Latino Immigration Policy Conference

On November 3, 2006 NYLARNet held its second policy conference on the topic of immigration policy. Over 150 academics, students, agency, legislative, and community organization staff, and interested individuals gathered at the Assembly Hall of the Campus Center at the University at Albany to listen to and to discuss six presentations focusing on the historical, political, and policy dimensions of Latino immigration in New York State.

The morning session of the conference explored the context of Latino immigration policy. During the afternoon several issues were discussed: workers rights, access to health and education services, and voting rights for noncitizens. The first two morning presentations provided useful historical and political background. Supply-side analyzes of immigrant flows from Mexico are usually focused on the role that economic conditions play as a push factor for cross-border movements. In her paper, Professor Susan Gauss, from the University at Albany, offered a different perspective. Her presentation raised an interesting question: What would the contemporary immigration picture be if the Mexican labor movement truly represented the best interest of Mexican workers? While her assessment was less than rosy, it nevertheless mapped out a terrain that is worth exploring in more detail.

In 1994, immigration historian Kitty Calavita wrote that U.S. immigration policy was doomed to fail. In her view, this was the case because immigration policy was unable to reconcile the interests of employers and workers, did not address the political implications of the need for low-wage labor, and required police functions that were at odds with liberal democratic principles. If Calavita is right, what Professor Manuel García y Griego, from the University of New Mexico, suggested during his talk should come as no surprise: as immigration policy failures become more evident, the tendency among policy-

makers is to react by proposing largely symbolic measures.

For his part, Professor Immanuel Ness, from Brooklyn College, CUNY, explored the implications for Latino immigrants of making guest worker programs the centerpiece of a new immigration policy. In his view, the guest worker strategy is bound to work well for employers by maintaining a steady flow of compliant workers. Labor is right to oppose guest worker programs, he told the audience, but this may be a futile stance. Instead, what is necessary is a strategy that is global in scope and focused on the right of all workers to organize.

Amy Sugimori, a labor lawyer and Executive Director of La Fuente, a Tri State Worker and Community Fund based in New York City, opened the afternoon session by noting how immigrant workers are not always compensated fully for their labor. Immigrants that rely on their own means of transportation to work but who are unable to secure a driver's license are put at a special disadvantage. Those who do domestic work find themselves in double jeopardy by their immigrant status and by the structure of their particular industry.

Maud Easter, from the Center for Women in Government and Civil Society at the University at Albany, pointed out the inadequacy of having a monocultural state bureaucracy addressing the needs of the more than one hundred and fifty diverse cultures that co-exist in New York. She also indicated that it is important for the State to address the issues immigrants face without succumbing to pressures to enforce federal immigration law. Without this bifurcated approach, she argued, all immigrants—documented or not—will be driven underground, away from public life and from the possibility of successful social integration.

On the face of it, political representation should be the least of immigrant concerns. In Congress, the New York delegation includes two Latinos that represent parts of



From left to right, Susan Gauss, Assistant Professor of History, University at Albany; Susan Herbst, Officer in Charge, University at Albany.

the Bronx, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens; in the State legislature four Latino Senators and 12 Latino Assemblymen provide representation; in the city itself, with 10 members, Latinos are 20 percent of the city council. Yet, Latinos lack parity in representation and their voice in the political process is muted. In 2004, for example, only 51 percent of Latinos registered to vote in the state and of those only 30 percent cast a ballot. Political marginality is therefore a serious problem. This results in neglect of Latino concerns. According to Ron Hayduk, from the Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY, the problem is compounded by the inability of noncitizens to vote. The most controversial of the policies recommended during the conference was his proposal to allow noncitizens to participate in the electoral process with full voting rights. Yet, as Hayduk demonstrated, even noncitizen voting is an alternative that is firmly grounded in logic and history.

The conference papers have been compiled in the volume *Latino Immigration Policy: Context, Issues, Alternatives*. To access the papers online or to purchase a copy of the book go to [www.nylarnet.org](http://www.nylarnet.org).

## U.S. Latino Studies at UAlbany

For more than three decades the Department of Latin American, Caribbean, and U.S. Latino Studies (LACS) has promoted interdisciplinary research and teaching in area and ethnic studies. LACS is particularly proud of its pioneering role in offering instruction and training in Puerto Rican studies and more recently in the broader field

of U.S. Latino Studies. This year our program will get a boost with the hiring of sociologist Maria Isabel Ayala, a graduate of Texas A&M University. Professor Ayala will join our faculty in September 2007.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
GO TO [WWW.ALBANY.EDU/LACS](http://WWW.ALBANY.EDU/LACS)**



## The CUNY Puerto Rican Faculty Recruitment Project

In response to Centro's publication of the NYLARNet Sponsored Policy Brief *The Decline of the Puerto Rican Fulltime Faculty at the City University of New York (CUNY) From 1981-2002*, authored by Hostos Community College Professor Felipe Pimentel, CUNY Chancellor

Mathew Goldstein established the Puerto Rican Faculty Recruitment Project. The Project's primary functions include conducting outreach and recruitment activities in all disciplines at CUNY and working with CUNY colleges to connect highly-qualified

candidates with positions available within the CUNY system.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE  
CONTACT PROFESSOR JOSE LUIS MORÍN  
AT [JMORIN@HUNTER.CUNY.EDU](mailto:JMORIN@HUNTER.CUNY.EDU)**

## The New York Latino Research Clearinghouse

The New York Latino Research Clearinghouse gathers and organizes the most recent research reports, books, academic papers, and policy news relating to the Latino populations of the United States. The Clearinghouse is co-sponsored by NYLARNet and the Institute for Urban Minority Education (IUME) at Teachers College, Columbia University.

**TO VISIT THE CLEARINGHOUSE GO TO:  
[WWW.TC.EDU/LATINORESEARCH/](http://WWW.TC.EDU/LATINORESEARCH/)**

### Credits of the Artwork From Teachers College Web site:

**LEFT:**  
*Un Pueblo Unido* by Theresa Rosado  
acrylic on Word (18"x24")  
Collection of Labor Council of Latin American Advancement, 2002 conference poster

**CENTER:**  
*Little Girl From Harlem* by Soraida Martinez  
"As a little girl living in Harlem, I always knew that Harlem was some kind of exile; what I didn't know was why I had to be there. There were happy times as well as sad times but, in order to escape, I would always daydream. I daydreamed of a back-

yard, of growing up and going to art school, and of moving away. As an adult I was always embarrassed to say that I was born in Harlem and that I had lived there until I turned fourteen because people were quick to judge me. Most people assume that I grew up middle class and came from a middle class neighborhood. Little do they know that there are lots of people from Harlem that are just like me."

**RIGHT:**  
*Viva Mexico!* by Theresa Rosado  
acrylic on Word (36"x48")  
Collection of Carmen Regalado  
Commissioned by Teacher's Discovery, 2005



## Mission and Contact Information

The New York Latino Research and Resources Network (NYLARNet) brings together the combined expertise of U.S. Latino Studies scholars and other professionals across research institutions within New York State in four target areas: Health, Education, Immigration, and Politics. This network is constituted by recognized scholars and other professionals who are engaged in critical thinking, dialogue, and the dissemination of information on U.S. Latino issues. NYLARNet addresses a broad spectrum of concerns related to the four target areas mentioned above, and provides information services to legislators, public agencies, community organizations, and the media on U.S. Latino affairs.

NYLARNet also pays special attention to the realities and needs of the largely neglected Latino populations outside of New York City.

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