



The Hispanic Border Leadership Institute

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# Entre Nosotros

Dedicated to Improving the Education of Hispanics in the U.S.

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## *The 21st Century: Turning Point for Latinos and the United States or Another Lost Opportunity?*

With the start of a new millenium, most major newspapers have been making predictions about the future. The predictions are based on what we know, which comes from those who are studying the changing demographics of the United States. Both the short- and long-term demographics indicate that the Latino population in the United States is growing very fast due to high immigration rates, high fertility rates among Hispanics, larger family sizes, and low mean age. Thus, it is being projected that the Hispanic population will be the largest of all people of color in the United States as early as 2025 and for sure by 2045. This shift in numerical status has implications in the political, social, economic, educational, and cultural arenas.

The dominant focus of discussion about the implications of the numerical shift has centered on three of these arenas: political, economic, and educational. As we have come to understand, in the political arena, population numbers translate into representation numbers in Congress, the drawing of district lines for elections, political parties attending to population groups, elections of representatives, and, ultimately, what public and budgetary interests are attended to and how.

In the economic arena, these shifts in demographics are of interest to product manufacturers and marketers, the service providers, employers, unions, stock markets, retirees, and so forth.

The most important arena is, however, education. The numerous newspaper reportings dramatically represents that the major players all understand what Thomas Jefferson stated as a constitutional founder of the United States: "If democracy is to survive, the United States will need an educated citizenry." With the coloring of the United States by the middle of the twenty-first century, elected officials, corporate America, educators, and the general public, all say that the education of our youth is critical for a bright future.

The question now is, will the attitude of the U.S. power structure go beyond what has to date been rhetoric? Will political parties put meaningful agendas of high interest to Hispanics on their platform? Will legislators draft and pass laws that will advance the needs of Hispanics? Will the business world hire and promote Hispanics to fully utilize their abilities? Will school board members and trustees pass and enforce educational policy that is beneficial to Latino youth? Will educators act responsibly on what research tells us will work to educate Hispanics? In short, will the new century bring about a new and serious way of behaving, not just talking?

HBLI will continue to work with all of the above to turn talk into action. By so doing, we should come to understand and appreciate that everyone wins.

Saludos,

Leonard A. Valverde  
Executive Director

**NEWS AT UTPA**

UTPA, HBLI fellow, **Glendelia Zavala** is assisting Laura Saenz, Lecturer in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Texas, Pan American, with her dissertation research study. The study will examine the effects of a classwide peer-tutoring intervention, namely, Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) on the reading performance of third- and fourth-grade limited English proficient (LEP) students with learning disabilities.

The Task Force for the doctoral program at UTPA met in LaJoya in October to review the progress and future plans of the program. The Task Force acts as an advisory council and consists of doctoral graduates of the cooperative program between the University of Texas, Austin and UTPA, doctoral students, school administrators, school board members, a state legislator, members of the administration of the Region I Service Center, professors and administrators of UTPA. This group meets three times a year in different places. HBLI fellows attended the meeting to report on their activities.

**NEWS AT NMSU**

The January 2000 Platica speakers for NMSU are Patsy and Nadine Cordova, who will speak about their fight against the Vaughn public schools. Vaughn, New Mexico is a rural community with less than 600 people, more than eighty-five percent Hispanic. In 1997, two high school teachers there were suspended for teaching about the Mexican-American—or Chicano—Farm Workers Movement and some of its leaders. The suspension of Patsy and Nadine Cordova attracted national attention from civil rights, cultural, and teaching organizations, and has divided the small town. But administrators said the issue is insubordination, not educational freedom or cultural censorship. In 1998 Nadine and Patsy Cordova won a \$500,000 out-of-court settlement stemming from their firings.

**NEWS AT ASU**

ASU Fellow **Ernestine Garcia** met with Arizona Governor Jane Hull during the opening ceremony of the state legislature on January 10. Ernestine, whose dissertation topic is in the area of school funding, is doing her field work with Senator Joe Eddie Lopez, who is involved with education and finance committees in the Senate. She plans to observe the legislature for six weeks, learning about both the House of Representatives and the Senate. She hopes to understand the role the legislature plays in K-16 education and finance. To do so, she will attend Senate and House committee meetings and observe the proceedings of both the House and the Senate.

On January 28, ASU Platica Speaker Dr. John A. Garcia, Political Science Professor from The University of Arizona, will talk about the 2000 Census and the implications to and involvement of the Latino community. Dr. Garcia has served on, and is past chair of, the Census 2000 Advisory Committee on Hispanic Populations, and he has worked on redistricting plans for several states and jurisdictions following the 1980 and 1990 censuses.

On February 25, Barbara Renaud Gonzalez, ASU's February Platica Speaker, will discuss the *destino* of Latinos in the next century. She is an author and radio commentator, who has published in several newspapers and magazines and whose commentaries have been heard on National Public Radio.

**NEWS AT UCR**

The University of California, Riverside, has a speaker, Dr. Carlos Ornelas, from the University of Mexico City, scheduled for March 6 and 7. Dr. Ornelas will speak to the HBLI Fellows about different parts and regions of Mexico and their educational system as well as the local conditions of education in various regions of Mexico.

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