

Drums of Diversity

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Latino Heritage Month!: A Time for Celebration, Reflection, and Action

By Dr. Jerry Garcia, Director U.S. Latino Studies Program at ISU

Welcome to the Office of Minority Student Affairs (MSA) and *Drums of Diversity*. Before email, phones, TV, radio, telegraph, runners, the pony express, mailman, signal towers, fire signals, smoke signals, etc., drums were the popular means of spreading news and communication.

Rhythmic sounds would tell us if danger is near, rain is coming, a baby's born, or if it was dinnertime. In times of storytelling, drums were used to emphasize the different voices and emotions of the characters.

We, at MSA, invite you to listen to our *Drums of Diversity* starting with this month's issue and its focus on Latino Heritage Month.

Learn from the different voices and perspectives and share experiences that contribute to the growth of the ISU community.

-Leonard Perry, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Minority Student Affairs.

This year marks the first time at Iowa State University that the term "Latino" rather than "Hispanic" is being used by the Latino Heritage Month Committee as a self-identifier. This is an important milestone because it represents an awareness of self-determination within the local Latino community. Although the term "Hispanic" has been used since the 1970s and is still widely accepted, to many it symbolizes control, a dilution of the vibrant individual Latino cultures, and a form of forced assimilation. I applaud those students and individuals who took it upon themselves to find a more inclusive term — Latino.

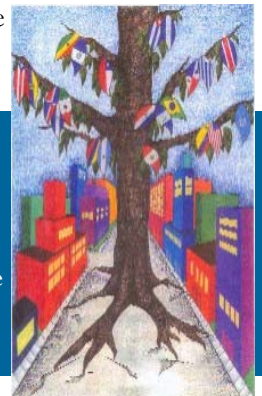
The Latino diaspora in the United States is represented by 20 countries from Latin America proper and the Caribbean. The current U.S. Census update puts the number of Latinos at 40 million strong and growing. Latinos can now be found in every state of the Union. The 2000 Census even recorded one Latino living in the state of Maine. By 2050 projections indicate over 105 million Latinos will reside in the U.S. And, although numbers are important, I submit that what is more important is the enormous history and culture that Latinos share amongst themselves and have contributed to the rest of the world. Latinos have made contributions to the development of not only the United States, but to the entire Hemisphere. Latinos are descendants of some of the most advanced civilizations to appear on earth. Their ancestors built the second largest pyramid outside of Egypt, developed the mathematical concept of zero, and invented one of only three known writing forms. The fabric that binds all Latinos is this shared history and culture.

Among the commonalities that Latinos share are languages such as English, Spanish, and Portuguese. In addition, there remain over 800 indigenous tongues still spoken in the Americas 100 in Mexico. We [Latinos] also share and embrace the importance of family, the love for *futbol* and baseball, and as the Latino community recently confirmed in a string of emails, we enjoy *salsa*, *tejano*, *folklorico*, or dancing in general! We are descendants of Indians that created some of the greatest wonders of the world that span from the *Tlingit* tribe from the Pacific Northwest, the *Ojibwas* of the upper Midwest, the *Hopi* of the southwest, to the *Arawak/Taino* Indians of the Caribbean, the *Aztecs* and *Mayans* of Mexico and Central America, to the *Incas* and *Guarani* of South America. We are also descendants of European/Black colonizers and African slaves. So, in the words of Jose Vasconcelos – Latinos truly are *La Raza Cosmica* or the Cosmic Race.

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Garcia: Celebration, Reflection, and Action (cont. from page 1.)

But, let us not forget that all Latinos experienced the legacy of conquest and colonization that continues today in many forms throughout the Western Hemisphere. The advancing armies of soldiers that took with them half of Mexico's territories or colonized such places as Puerto Rico, or left a legacy of corruption that would lead to the Cuban Revolution, have been replaced by the militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. The advancing Army is now the U.S. Border Patrol and vigilante groups that oppress and violate the rights of Latinos. **Colonization takes many forms. In many cases it is physical, but often it is psychological.** In a time



when America embraces superficial elements of Latino culture such as *salsa*, which remains a popular form of dance and the number one condiment in the United States, the country shuns the indigenous and Spanish languages, resists the idea that the American Southwest was not bought for 15 million dollars, but invaded and conquered by design, denies that Puerto Rico — a commonwealth in name only— remains the oldest colony in the world. The short answer is that the master narrative of U.S. history proclaims it as such regardless of its historical inaccuracies, and the U.S. lives in a culture of fear. So, Latino Heritage Month provides an opportunity to balance the historical record and to reassert our space as the first Americans of this Hemisphere, to share our culture, and historical resiliency in the face of oppression. We often fail to remember that Latino Heritage Month is celebrated between September 15 and October 15 because this is the period so many Latin American countries broke the colonial

yoke of Spain and achieved independence in the early nineteenth century. The three *gritos* (or proclamations) also represent this idea of self-determination - *El Grito de Dolores* by Father Miguel Hidalgo proclaimed Independence for Mexico (Mexico September 16), *El Grito de Lares* led by Matias Brugman proclaimed Puerto Rican independence (Puerto Rico September 23), and Cuba proclaimed independence with *El Grito de Yara* on October 10 — just to name a few. **The legacy of self-determination has always been a guide for our [Latino] community development and mobilization.** However, we as Latinos have also had our moments of disagreements and divide. This simply cannot continue in a time when we face an onslaught of challenges from multiple fronts. In the five years that I have been at ISU I have seen such individuals as Professor Sidner Larson push forward the idea of unity within the Latino, Tribal, and communities of difference in an effort to stop the displacement of people of color here at this University. I applaud your ideas and efforts.

So, what does all this mean?

What is this shared history of Indianness, conquest and colonization, independence, and finally incorporation into the United States? It means a shared history, but also a form of diversity that is unique to Latinos. A form of diversity that strengthens the Latino community, but at the same time challenges us a community. **The beauty of the Latino diaspora is that each sub-group has its own unique history, culture, customs, and subtle differences.** These differences range from the foods we eat, music we listen to, dances we

enjoy, languages we speak, our political orientations, and economic backgrounds.

However, I submit that these very differences can be our strengths as a Latino community if we respect what every group brings to the forefront and use it as a catalyst for change. We also know that a true community is much more than simply sharing a space, especially in locations such as Ames and ISU. **To make a difference within and outside of our community, we must unify our own house.** At ISU, the Latino students, staff, and faculty struggle in that place call "otherness." Because we have such a small mass, any disruption within the Latino community has an exponential affect and thus concerns us all. In my opinion and in the opinion of others our Latino/Tribal communities and communities of difference remain in a crisis at ISU. A crisis that will only deepen unless we— as a community— can put our differences aside and take direct action to liberate ourselves. We must ask how we can sustain our communities when our elders and mentors are being denied tenure, experiencing discrimination within their home departments, and are leaving to save themselves from the psychological trauma. How is this [sustaining] possible? We can point the finger in many directions to assign blame, but first they must be directed at our communities for remaining silent, ambivalent, and/or simply ignorant of what is happening to our elders, mentors, and students. **Let us not become a community of individuals...this is not our heritage.** The Latino community and people of color in general must engage this University for change; otherwise, we leave ourselves vulnerable to exploitation and further erosion of our resources, which are our people.

In the final analysis, Latino Heritage Month is really a reminder of what still needs to be done. However, as we develop and formulate ideas for change let us also **celebrate and enjoy the heritage of the second largest ethnic group in the U.S. Paz!**

Students' Perspective

College Perspective

College of Agriculture: Who is Nina Grant?

Since 1998, Nina Grant has served as the Director of Multicultural Programs and Minority Liaison Officer for the ISU College of Agriculture (Ag). She coordinates the Ag College's summer research internship program and works with students, staff, and faculty to promote an environment conducive to the successful recruitment, retention, graduation, and placement of students of color. She serves as advisor for MANRRS or Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences — a professional student organization. She is also the advisor for several student organizations including Sigma Lambda Gamma, the Marching Cyclones Drill Team, Descarga, and Identifying as ME (Multi Ethnic). Nina is also currently a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. Her research focuses on biracial and multiracial college students. Nina obtained both her Bachelor of Science degree and Master of Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Human Development and Family Studies in Family Science and in Health and Human Performance. Nina has received significant recognitions for her involvement in various initiatives that contribute to the growth and development of students and student programs. Her goals for this semester are to meet and get to know students in her college that she does not already know and to continue to serve the students she knows — helping them reach their educational goals. On a more personal note, Nina Grant was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is an only child, enjoys shopping, visiting museums, watching HGTV (Home and Garden Television), and raising her 22 month old daughter named Mireia Azul. Nina is married to Mike Grant, Assistant Football Coach at Iowa State University. *Nina Wants You!... to stop in to say HELLO! and join her and the College of Ag in their ongoing events and activities that help lead students to success at Iowa State University.*

APEX 4 LIFE

"Welcome to APEX..." "Conos mon dios..." "Pork Chop Sandwiches!" "Poop!" "They will send you a bill..." "It's study time y'all, open y'all doors!" "This is serious time!" "Anti-social Amanda," "Mr. Roboto," "Hallway Sports and Fire Alarms." These and many other phrases describe our APEX experiences.

APEX, an eight-week summer program sponsored by the Office of Minority Student Affairs or MSA, granted us experiences we will never forget. **APEX** gave forty-two students from all walks of life the opportunity to take summer classes at Iowa State and helped them make a smooth transition from high school to college.

Coming into the program, each of us had different expectations about where the next eight weeks would lead us. Many of us believed that our summer would consist of a vigorous study schedule with minimal breaks and no cookies while others of us believed it [**APEX**] would provide the opportunity to experience the independence of college life. In the end, we found it was a mix of both expectations. With our main goal being to complete classes successfully, we achieved much more.

We gained a head start on our college experience. For those of us who become easily disoriented, we learned to navigate our way around campus. We all learned more about time management and money management skills. Most of all, we established lifelong friendships.

APEX provided opportunities for social development; we had to "relearn" how to make friends. As strange as that may sound, for many of us it was a new experience to make friends with others who had no prior knowledge of who we were or who we had been in high school. This experience carried over into the fall semester and at events such as the recent Student of Color Retreat where we had the opportunity to meet more new students.

Even with all the new people we've met over the past few weeks, we [**APEX**] are still here for each other. We in different majors, different dorms, and different classes, but we still manage to make time for one another. We eat lunch, study, and spend the weekends together. Hey! We even attend retreats together, where we eat, eat, eat, and eat *s'mores!* This summer and **APEX** made us a family; we will support one another through the coming years.

We are **APEX 4 LIFE**.

— by **Angel Ceasar, Vanessa Easton, Hildegard Garma, Amanda Marruffo, and Emily Merrick**



MSA Calendar of Events

September

- 29th: **Sabor Latino—A Taste of Latino Cuisine**
11am-1pm; Lebaron Hall Lounge
- 30th: **MSA Community of Color Town Meeting**
UDCC Multipurpose Room
5:30 pm-7:00 pm

October

- 2nd: **F.A.C.E.S. — City of Ames**
10am-6pm; East of Ames City Hall
- 3rd: **Latino Film Festival**
6pm-9pm; see ISU website
- 4th: **The Spirit of Harriet Tubman,
a performance**
8pm; Great Hall — MU
- 5th: **"Celebrating our Triumphs"**
7pm-8:30pm; Campanile Room — MU
- 11th: **Rosemary Feal: Languages on the Latin
American Literary Map**
7pm; Brunnier Gallery, Scheman Building
- 12th: **"The Difference Between Latino & Hispanic"**
7pm-8:30pm; Campanile Room — MU
- 17th: **Latino Film Festival**
6pm-9pm; Cardinal Room — MU
- 24th: **Noche De Cultura**
6pm-9pm; Great Hall — MU
- 28th: **MSA Community of Color Town Meeting**
UDCC Multipurpose Room
5:30pm-7:00pm
- 29th: **Day of the Dead (Dia de Los Muertos)**
10am-2pm; Memorial Union Lobby
- 29th: **Annual Conference: Strengthening and Valuing
Latino/a Communities—** Friday and
Saturday in Des Moines by the **Iowa Division of
Latino Affairs**

* To add your organization or office event to the MSA calendar for the next issue, please submit to omsa@iastate.edu no later than October 25th.

Month's Campus Organization

"UNITING NOSSAS RAICES"

David Romero, President Latino
Heritage Month
Committee 2004

Our Mission: We as Latina/os at Iowa State University acknowledge and recognize that unified and true power comes from diversity. We attempt to promote awareness within and outside of the Latina/o community that includes all facets of our culture rooted in Indigenous, African, and European ancestry. Thus, our mission statement is to promote a level of political, social, cultural, and ethnic awareness that further the development of the Latina/o community both on a collegiate and community plane.

Our 2004 Theme: The biggest issue we face right now as a Latino Community is the struggle to unite and recognize the diversity within our own community. Hence the theme for this year's Latino Heritage Month — **"UNITING NOSSAS RAICES."** The title represents a combination of English, Portuguese, and Spanish. The purpose of the Latino Heritage Month (LHM) Committee has changed from a social activities planning committee to a more educative committee. I quote the words of the LHM Vice-President Marcus Camacho "We will no longer allow ourselves to be subjugated, defined, and represented by a simple term like HISPANIC that only reflects a linguistic heritage." This change is a result of the need to redefine and empower our Latino Community.



MSA Program Update Page

MVP News

The Multicultural Visions Program (MVP) enrolled 100 new students this semester. The group started out great with the Mentor/Mentee Ice-Cream Social and has kept the positive energy going ever since!

FAMILY RECEPTION

One of our favorite annual events took place Saturday the 18th of September. Why our favorite you might ask? The Annual Family Reception is a great way for the entire MVP community to come together. The MVP students' families get to know staff, faculty and the MVP seminar leaders who support the program. In the morning, there was a semi-formal breakfast that gave everyone the opportunity to meet and greet each other. Carmen Flage, coordinator of the Multicultural Visions Program opened with an enthusiastic welcome. Leonard Perry, Associate Dean and Director of Minority Student Affairs also shared remarks with the MVP. Throughout the morning, staff, faculty and seminar leaders introduced themselves to the visiting families. For ISU, it is always an honor to have the families of the MVP students on campus and this year's family reception was no exception.

MENTOR/MENTEE ICE-CREAM SOCIAL

The Mentor/Mentee Ice-Cream Social, the first of the year, brought together first year MVP students with their upper-class mentors on Thursday August 26, 2004. This event set the tone for the rest of the semester. Students were excited to meet their mentors and mentees. This informal gathering provided a good opportunity for MVP students (old and new) to get to know one another. They mingled, had a couple scoops of ice cream, and ended the evening with a raffle awarding Iowa State gear. The evening also provided the MVP seminar leaders with an opportunity to get to know the first-year students and show off their talents and charisma as hosts for the evening. Unfortunately the evening was cut short by a Tornado warning. Regardless of the circumstances, the MVP community took advantage of the opportunity and continued bonding. Students stayed together on the ground floor of the Memorial Union and continued there through the warning, proving that there's nothing that can stop the MVP students from spending quality time together.

THANKS!

This sincere "thank you" goes out to the MVP seminar leaders. This group of talented students has taken on an incredible amount of responsibility. As seminar leaders, these students have to attend all of the MVP programming, take an extra one-credit leadership course and facilitate seminars for all of the first-year MVP recipients. As if this is not enough, many of them are currently involved in other leadership roles on campus. Thus far, these students have shown outstanding leadership skills in hosting and facilitating MVP programs including the Mentor/Mentee Ice-cream Social, MVP Family Reception.

Therefore, on behalf of MVP and MSA – **THANK YOU!** Your leadership is exemplary to the entire community of color. We couldn't have done it without you!

MSA REMINDERS!!!!



Come! Listen! Learn! Have Fun!

MSA Friday Nites @ Clyde's

Fridays: Movies, Popcorn, and YOU!!!
UDCC from 8 pm – midnight
Beginning in October

Events to Encourage Voter's Registration

Sponsored by the Iowa Collegiate Empowerment Coalition (ICEC)

September 30th	Debate Watch Party
October 16th	Talent Show
October 20th	Local Candidate Debate Forum

MSA Community of Color Town Meetings

Last Thursdays of each month
UDCC Multipurpose Room from 5:30 'til 7pm

For more information, Visit the MSA website at
www.msa.iastate.edu