

# Latino Community Initiatives

THE BIRTH OF THE U.S. LATINO AGENDA AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

- *EL CONCILIO LATINO/HISPANO/AMERICANO*  
AN INITIATIVE OF U.S. LATINO STUDIES AT  
DUKE UNIVERSITY
- LATINO/HISPANIC ISSUES AT DUKE UNIVERSITY  
A DISCUSSION PAPER BY DR. RUDERMAN



***EL CONCILIO LATINO/HISPANO/AMERICANO***  
**DUKE UNIVERSITY**  
**AUGUST 1998**

*El Concilio Latino/Hispano/Americano*, with approximately sixty faculty, student, and staff, was formed in the fall 1997 to foster a Latino intellectual community at Duke University and to develop a U.S. Latino agenda for the campus. An initiative of U.S. Latino studies, *El Concilio* has organized its work around three major themes that are being addressed by three separate working subcommittees: 1) research and academics; 2) student and campus life; and 3) community outreach.

Research and Academics: Coordinated by Professor Walter Mignolo, chair of Romance Studies, and Daniel Ramirez, doctoral student in Religion, this committee has as its primary goal the formation of a plan for the establishment of a U.S. Latino research institute. It also seeks to organize conferences and promote the recruitment and retention of Latina/o faculty. Recently it received funding for a Latino Borderlands Working Group whose discussions and work will help guide us in our efforts to institute an U.S. Latino Studies program at Duke. Two conferences are planned for fall 1998:

- ◆ The State of U.S. Latino Studies: A National Snapshot
- ◆ Liberation and Community Service: A Conversation with Gustavo Gutierrez

Student and Campus Life: Coordinated by Veronica Guzman, undergraduate admissions officer, and Julian Sanchez, Director of Intercultural Affairs, this committee focuses on graduate and undergraduate student recruitment and retention. It has been charged to assess the quality of campus life for Latina/o students and to make recommendations that will help improve it.

On May 6, 1998, *El Concilio* organized a meeting on the subject of undergraduate Latino/Hispanic recruitment and recommended several strategies to raise Duke's current percentage of Latino matriculants (4% in 1997) to match that of the universities with whom we often compare ourselves. We currently lag behind them by about 2-5%.

Community Outreach: Coordinated by John Herrera, outreach coordinator for the Center for International Studies, and Hortensia Calvo, Perkins Library bibliographer, this committee seeks to understand the needs of and extend support to the Triangle's Latino community. Its focus is in the areas of education, public safety and law enforcement, housing, banking, and health. Following, to name a few, are some activities in which the *Concilio* has been engaged:

- ◆ Volunteer tutoring project with the Centro Hispano
- ◆ Discussions with major bankers seeking to service the Latino community
- ◆ Consultations with city law enforcement agencies
- ◆ Latino community development project with the Hayti Development Corporation
- ◆ National Latino Summit: "Guest Worker" (*Bracero*) Legislation



## Latino/Hispanic Issues at Duke University

### **A Discussion Paper**

Prepared by Judith Ruderman, August 1998

In response to initiatives by Latino/Hispanic students and organizations on the Duke campus, and to the changing demographics of our state and nation, I present this background information in order to assist in conversations about institutional priorities regarding matriculation of Latino/Hispanic students and support of their academic performance and co-curricular activities.<sup>1</sup>

### Terminology<sup>2</sup>

The word "Hispanic" refers to persons whose cultural and/or linguistic heritage derives from Hispania, the Roman name for Spain. Like the term "Jew," "Hispanic" refers to people of different nationalities and ethnicities (of course there are Jewish Hispanics as well, the Sephardim!). Although there are large exceptions, since Hispanics are quite heterogeneous, in the main the common language is Spanish, the common culture derives from Spain, and the common religion is Catholicism.

Many American Hispanics disagree with the term Hispanic, preferring to identify themselves as Mexican Americans or Chicanos, for example, in the belief that the term Hispanic is colonialist. Many American Puerto Ricans prefer to be called Boricuas to set themselves apart from island Puerto Ricans. Indeed, some in these two groups consider that they became Americans by "conquest" and differentiate themselves from other Hispanic groups in this country who are political refugees. The term "American Hispanic" includes five groups: Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Hispanos, Cuban Americans, and Latinos (Hispanics from everywhere else!). The lack of consistency in terminology is mirrored in this paper and, indeed, is one of the questions posed for consideration.<sup>3</sup>

### Demographics

**State.** This summer, Governor Jim Hunt created the Governor's Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, a 15-voting member group dedicated to representing to state government the concerns and needs of the state's Hispanic population. Now estimated at 350,000, this population is the fastest growing ethnic group in North Carolina. Duke could play a significant research role in the Governor's initiative (see below, section on U. S. Latino Research Institute).

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<sup>1</sup> My thanks to the following people for their input: Julian Sanchez, Christoph Guttentag, Maureen Cullins, Mary Nijhout, Bruce Cunningham, Nerissa Rivera, Judith White.

<sup>2</sup> The information in this section comes from an extract from a study of American Hispanics by Dr. Felipe de Ortego y Gasca, Dean of the Hispanic Leadership Institute and Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Arizona State University in Tempe. My thanks to Julian Sanchez for this extract.

<sup>3</sup> I recently saw a painting in the Millicent Rodgers Museum in Taos, NM, by a "Hispanic" artist, that captures these intricacies of naming. See the attached copy of a photograph that I took, with accompanying curatorial description.

**Nation.** About 26.4 million Latino Americans lived in the continental United States in 1994, 64% of Mexican ancestry, 13% from Central and South America and the Caribbean, 11% from Puerto Rico, 5% from Cuba, and 7% "other." Sixty-four percent of Latino Americans are U. S.-born citizens residing in the United States.<sup>4</sup> One of the difficulties in counting American Hispanics is that many of them self-report as White or Black (even Native American), rather than Hispanic.<sup>5</sup> Projections for the year 2050 are that Latino Americans will constitute a quarter of the total U. S. population, and will, therefore, be the largest ethnic population group in the country.

**Campus.** The Duke undergraduate class of 2002 has the largest number of Latino/Hispanic students ever—82—and equals the best percentage we've ever had: almost 5% of the class. This raw number is up more than 25% over last year. All together there are 280 Latino/Hispanic undergraduates, of whom about 100 participate in financial aid programs. The Fuqua School increased its percentage of Latino/Hispanics in the entering class from 1.2% in 1997 to 3.5% this fall. In 1997, the Medical School reported an astonishing 700% increase in Latino/Hispanic applicants<sup>6</sup>; there were 5 matriculants last year and six this year, or 6% of the incoming class. (Duke has enrolled this year "more underrepresented minorities, by percentage of its overall class, than any of its peer [medical] schools," according to a recent article in the *Herald-Sun*.) There are no Latino/Hispanics in this year's entering class of Divinity students. Seven are entering the Graduate School, out of 51 minority students, and 39 are returning, out of 213 returning minority students. Law School statistics will be available next month.

On the faculty and faculty resources side, Duke has a joint program in Latin-American studies with UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as its own Council.<sup>7</sup> The Latin-American studies collection in the Library has received extra funding this year to expand beyond the core, and a post-doc bibliographer will soon formally evaluate the holdings. The Duke Press publishes *Hopscotch: A Cultural Review*, a new English-language magazine on Hispanic culture and politics, and Duke's Gustavo Perez-Firmat is one of the editors of a new Norton anthology in English of Latino literature (in two versions, one for academics and the other for the general public), to be issued in 2002.

### **Latino/Hispanic Organizations at Duke University**

Duke University now has three social/cultural organizations specifically dedicated to the concerns of its own Latino/Hispanic citizens: *Mi Gente: Asociacion de Estudiantes*

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<sup>4</sup> I have found different numbers in different sources; let us consider these figures approximate.

<sup>5</sup> I was surprised and intrigued last month, at lunch with Mr. and Mrs. Howard, to discover that Reggie Howard was Hispanic—both parents are from Panama, and they pronounce his name in the Spanish way.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Brenda Armstrong noted this figure at the May 1997 discussion of African-American issues on this campus.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed, according to Robert Durden, in his recent *The Launching of Duke University, 1924-1949* (Duke University Press, 1993, p. 134), Duke began to be a nationally recognized center for Latin American studies in the 1920s, with the acquisition by the Duke Press of the *Hispanic American Historical Review* and the hiring of J. Fred Rippy by the department of history. After 1930, Alan Manchester, who later became dean of Trinity College, added further luster to the program; unlike Rippy he was even home grown, with a Duke Ph.D. in history.

*Latinos*, founded in 1992; the Rho chapter of Lambda Upsilon Lambda fraternity, formed in 1995; and the *Concilio Latino/Hispano/Americano*, founded in 1997. The first two are for undergraduate students, and the third is a broader-based and –focused association. Another organization—a Latina sorority—is in its formative stages.

*Mi Gente* began as a group called Salsa, but substituted a political focus for the social/cultural focus of its predecessor.<sup>8</sup> Allying with Student Action with Farm Workers in October 1992, *Mi Gente* fought successfully to have the University reinstate its participation in the California grape boycott; but controversy surrounding this decision contributed to a negative image of the organization and diminishing membership. An undergraduate student who studied *Mi Gente* for a course assignment concluded that political activity has dropped along with the participation and the focus is once more cultural. In contrast, the past head of the Spectrum argues that much of the highly political work of organizations like Spectrum and Desegregate Duke is carried out by Latino/as who are also members of *Mi Gente*; indeed, he would say that, in the past three years, “the most active and radical members of Spectrum” have been *Mi Gente* Members.<sup>9</sup> Fewer than a quarter of Duke’s Latino students are members of *Mi Gente*, and most members are not active. Interestingly, non-Latinos are increasingly joining the group, and even holding leadership positions—a situation not without controversy of its own.

*Mi Gente* provides a social outlet for Duke students and performs outreach activities with Durham’s Latino community, with members serving as tutors for youth and translators at DUMC and the Lincoln Community Health Center. Participation in such political movements as Race Day, the “sweatshop” policy, or even the residential housing debate is minimal.

Internal dissension has arisen from the complexities of what we might term identity politics. Different experiences of different segments of the Latino community influence what they want out of the organization. During its history, *Mi Gente* has been labelled “too Cuban” or “too Chicano”; various parts of the Latino community have felt alienated from the group at various points, depending on their own background and the current composition and leadership of the organization. Not surprisingly, racial and class differences have hampered cohesiveness. International students, as well as students from middle and upper class immigrant families, tend not to join. Only the “white elite” of Spain and Latin America attend the University, since Duke does not provide financial aid to international students, and these students, along with their affluent domestic counterparts, often do not wish to align themselves with *Mi Gente*’s less advantaged

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<sup>8</sup> For much of the following information on *Mi Gente* I am indebted to a term paper prepared in December 1997 by a student in WST 150. My thanks to Dr. Judith White, instructor for the course, for sharing this paper with me. However, I should note that the past head of Spectrum, Dagmawi Woubshet, who has read my accounting of this information, disagrees with some of this student’s assessment; I have incorporated his views as well.

<sup>9</sup> Dagmawi Woubshet, e-mail message to Julian Sanchez about this paper, July 8, 1998. I note here that because of confusion between Spectrum organization and Spectrum living group—the two have members in common but are not the same—the latter changed its name this past year to Prism.



members or their political initiatives. Conversely, the membership of the organization may not send out welcoming signals to these groups.

In spring semester, two members of Mi Gente—Roberto Gonzalez and Hector Hernandez—requested funding for seven students to attend the Collegiate Leadership Network conference of the National Hispanic Institute (a little more than \$3,000). They received enough money to send five.

*La Unidad Latina*, Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity, was begun at Cornell in 1982 and now has chapters on more than 35 college campuses on the east coast, including at Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, Dartmouth, Princeton, and Brown. Duke's chapter was established in 1995 by seven male undergraduates and recently began to engage in cooperative ventures with Chispa, the Hispanic student group at UNC-Chapel Hill. Membership at Duke is about twenty brothers, who participate in such activities as tutoring, bachelor auction for charity, and various cultural and social events. This group does not live together as a housing unit; although they submitted a proposal for a selective living group in 1997, they chose not to accept the Trent location offered in response to all new proposals that year.

In February, this fraternity, represented by its treasurer Christopher Brandt-Rodriguez, along with Luis Villalon, took a leadership role in pulling together a multi-faceted funding proposal called Duke University: Latino Initiatives. The proposal requested many thousands of dollars for a recruitment weekend, including a major Salsa/Merengue band (Dark Latin Groove), as well as one or more scholarships designated for Latino/Hispanics. A Latino/Hispanic Cultural and Academic Center was also requested (a *Consilio* initiative). Janet Smith Dickerson agreed to contribute toward the band for spring 1998 and encouraged timely proposals, through normal channels, for 1998-99 cultural events.

The *Concilio Latino/Hispano/Americano*, with approximately sixty members, was formed in fall 1997 to foster a Latino intellectual community at Duke and to develop a U.S. Latino agenda for the campus. An initiative of U.S. Latino studies, the *Consilio* has organized its work around three themes that are addressed by separate subcommittees: research and academics; student and campus life; and community outreach.

Research and Academics: Coordinated by Walter Mignolo, professor and chair of Romance Studies, and Daniel Ramirez, doctoral student in Religion, this committee has as its chief goal the formulation of a plan for the establishment of a U.S. Latino research institute. (This institute, as noted above, could take a formative leadership position in assisting Governor Hunt in his recently announced Governor's Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs.) It also seeks to organize conferences and promote the recruitment and retention of Latina/o faculty. Recently it received funding for a Latino Borderlands Working Group.

Student and Campus Life: Coordinated by Rebeca Palacio, undergraduate admissions officer<sup>10</sup>, and Julian Sanchez, director of Intercultural Affairs, this committee is charged with understanding and enhancing the overall quality of campus life for Latina/o students; it focuses on recruitment and retention efforts.

Community Outreach: Coordinated by John Herrera, outreach coordinator for International Studies, and Hortensia Calvo, Perkins Library bibliographer, this committee seeks to provide support to the Triangle Latino community in the areas of education, public safety and law enforcement, housing, banking, and health, among others.

On May 6, 1998, the *Concilio* organized a meeting on the subject of undergraduate Latino/Hispanic recruitment and recommended several strategies to bring our current percentage of matriculants—4% in 1997—to a par<sup>a</sup> with the SHYMP and peer institutions, which we lag behind by 2-5%. The recommendations were as follows:

- Institutionalizing a Latina/o admissions officer position in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Institutionalizing a campus visitation program
- Formalizing the current phone-a-thon program
- Institutionalizing the “Nuestra Latinidad” brochure
- Continuing to develop the Latino Alumni Network
- Continuing to develop the parents’ committee
- Intensifying efforts to improve yield through personalized correspondence
- Intensifying recruitment efforts in Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, Texas, and Puerto Rico.

### **Additional Centers**

The Office of Intercultural Affairs, the Mary Lou Williams Center, the Center for International Studies, the Center for Latin American Studies, and individual departments also provide cultural and/or academic services and programs on Latino/Hispanic topics. In April 1998, for example, Chicano poet Gary Soto gave a poetry reading and discussion sponsored by the four offices named above. The previous month, a Duke Latino symposium to honor liberation philosopher Enrique Dussel was sponsored by the departments of Religion and Romance Studies, the Divinity School, the Council on Latin American Studies, and the program in Literature.

### **Issues for Discussion:**

#### **Terminology**

The varieties of “hispanicity” are many, though the census uses the word “Hispanic” to capture them all. “Latino/Hispanic” is the COFHE category. Which terminology should we use at Duke? What are the pros and cons?

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<sup>10</sup> Rebeca has left her position and Duke University to return to school. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has hired Veronica Guzman, a Spanish-speaking Latino/Hispanic woman, as her replacement.

## Recruitment

Shall we inaugurate a fly-in for undergraduate Latino/Hispanic recruits? If so, should we tack it onto/make it part of BSA weekend?

In one class there are only 5 Puerto Ricans (from Puerto Rico): shall we put resources into sending an admissions recruiter there?

Shall we target a specific percentage of matriculants, and if so, what should it be? 6%? 8%? For the class entering in 1996, Duke was at 4%, peer at 6%, and SHYMP at 9% ("follower" was at 6%). We lost ground from 1991 and everyone else gained.

How much benefit in the admissions process should be given to Latino applicants? To what extent would we be willing to sacrifice other goals, such as academic quality or maximizing the consistency of decisions for a secondary school?

Shall we look to identification with a Latino/Hispanic culture as a factor in consideration for admission? Shall we make distinctions among Latino/Hispanics on the basis of country of origin or socio-economic class?

## Financial Aid

Should we actively seek funding for undergraduate scholarships geared toward Latino/Hispanics?

Duke Endowment minority scholarships (Graduate School) are largely for African Americans; should we change the focus to include Latino/Hispanics (but not at the expense of African Americans), seek new monies for a specifically targeted scholarship, or leave things as they are?

About 35% (or 99) of our Latino/Hispanic undergraduates receive non-merit financial aid; they constitute 4.8% of the aided undergraduates. On average each of them receives \$21,500, less than African Americans and more than Asians or Whites. If we increased our percentage of Latino/Hispanics in the entering class from almost 5% to almost 6%, we would have 18 more students at a projected additional financial aid cost of \$136,800. Can we afford to do so?

How can we help our students tap into external funding sources earmarked and/or appropriate to them?

## Academic Life

How should/can/will the Arts and Sciences curriculum review enhance Latino/Hispanic initiatives?

Duke was in the top 100 institutions for doctoral degrees conferred on Hispanics—at 92<sup>nd</sup> place. Harvard was 19<sup>th</sup>, Stanford 21<sup>st</sup>, Northwestern 46<sup>th</sup>, Brown 47<sup>th</sup>, Princeton 74<sup>th</sup>. Do we have a conception of an optimal “place” for us?

How does the academic performance of our Latino/Hispanic undergraduate students compare with that of students in general at Duke? Six year graduation rates in the NCAA report for the Duke class entering in fall 1990 indicate that Hispanic men graduated at a lower rate than all men but Hispanic women graduated at a higher rate than all women (Hispanic men, 86%; All men, 92%. Hispanic women, 97%; all women, 95%. Total Hispanics, 91%; Total all students, 93%).<sup>11</sup> A study conducted in 1997 for the provost’s advisory committee on student support services revealed that for the classes graduating between 1989 and 1996, a small risk for poor performance across admissions reader rating sums was found for this population, though<sup>4</sup> there was little relationship between the reader rating sums of Latino/Hispanic students and their grade point average at graduation: some did better than would have been predicted and others worse (By comparison, much more of the GPA variation for White and Black students could be predicted by the variation in reader rating sum).<sup>12</sup>

### Co-Curricular Life

How much funding should be available for Latino/Hispanic requests and from whom shall that funding be requested?

Should a new residential plan for undergraduates encourage the formation of theme houses of concern to Latino/Hispanic students

### Campus Climate

Do Latino/Hispanic students confront some of the same classroom climate issues that African American students report?

Are there gender-related issues we should attend to that affect Latino/Hispanic students in their adjustment to/success at Duke University?

To what extent should administrators, faculty, or students directly address issues deriving from the fact that there are subgroups within the category Latino/Hispanic—subgroups with both shared and diverse values and experiences?

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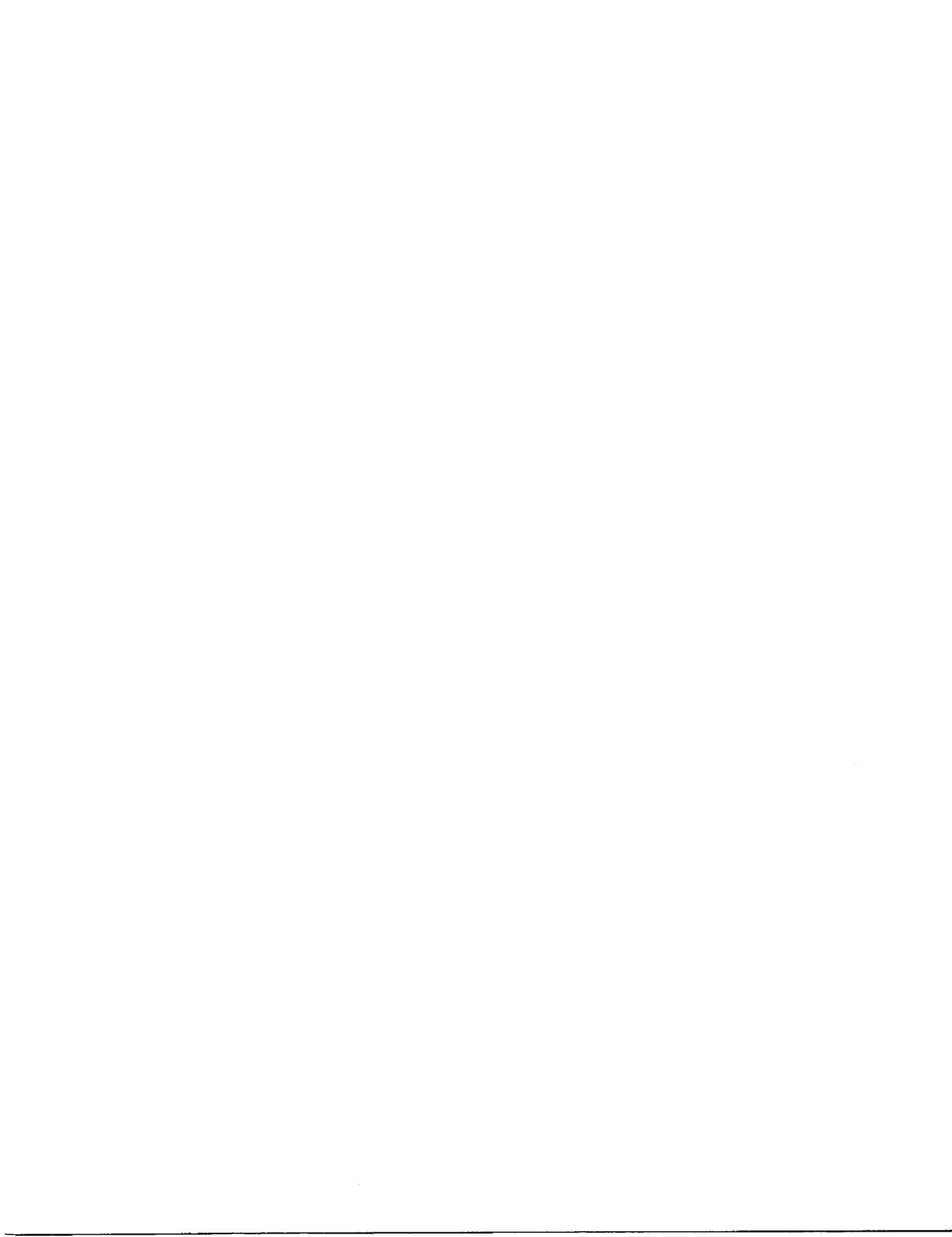
<sup>11</sup> Information supplied by University Registrar.

<sup>12</sup> The study, conducted by Professor Monty Reichert, was re-examined by Dean Mary Nijhout for this purpose. Since the Hispanic population was the smallest of the four groups considered in this study, the interpretations are not very robust.



THE U.S. LATINO STUDIES INTITATIVE

- LATINO BORDERLANDS WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL - APRIL 1998
- LATINO BORDERLANDS WORKING GROUP RENEWAL PROPOSAL
- LATINOS IN THE BORDERLANDS: THERORY, MEDIA AND REPRESENTATION PROPOSAL
- RE-CONSTRUCTING TIME AND BORDERS: LATINA/O RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL CHANGE AND IDENTITIES SYMPOSIUM PROPOSAL
- RE-CONSTRUCTING TIME AND BORDERS: LATINA/O RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL CHANGE AND IDENTITIES SYMPOSIUM WITH ENRIQUE DUSSEL - MARCH 1998
- LATINO STUDIES COLLECTION ASSESSMENT TERESA CHAPA - JANUARY 2000
- MIGNOLO, STARN, VIEGO LETTER TO VICE PROVOST CATHY DAVIDSON - JANUARY 2000
- VICE PROVOST CATHY DAVIDSON'S REPLY TO MIGNOLO, STARN, AND VIEGO - MARCH 2000
- LATINO/A STUDIES COURSE DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM TO THE ARTS & SCIENCES FACULTY DEAN ROBERT J. THOMPSON - APRIL 2000



Date: April 30, 1998  
To: Duke-UNC Program in Latin American Studies Executive Committee  
From: Walter Mignolo/Lucila Vargas/Daniel Ramírez  
Re: Working Group Proposal: Latino Borderlands

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### Latino Borderlands Working Group Proposal

The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else....the future will belong to the mestiza. Because the future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos—that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave—la mestiza creates a new consciousness. (Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, 1987)

#### Statement of Purpose

The Latino Borderlands Working Group proposes to convene a series of interdisciplinary encounters around the experience and identity of the northernmost Latin American “nation” of the hemisphere, a “nation” whose population has been conservatively estimated at at least 24 million, whose diversity represents a microcosm of the hemisphere, and whose myriad experiences and identities offer exciting points for comparison and analysis. From the centuries-old settlements in San Augustin and Santa Fe to the more recent outposts in Durham and Clinton, the U.S. Latino community(ies) represents a new frontier of inquiry for scholars involved in Latin American (and other area ) studies. The paradigm shift first signalled by Gloria Anzaldúa has reverberated in many disciplines and areas of study. No longer can the peripheral pocho or the marginal Nuyorican be relegated to a secondary status (or caricature, as in the case of the pachuco in Octavio Paz’ *Laberinto de la Soledad*) in serious scholarship. Indeed, in an era of increasingly permeable borders, the historical and current experience of the borderlands may help to inform and signal a path forward for an academic community undergoing its own share of paradigm and area shifts.

The Latino Borderlands Working Group proposes to explore themes of border experience, and how this border experience is generating new subjectivities entrenched with new forms of knowing, demanding a critical (and latino/a) perspective on modern epistemology. Although borderlands is a metaphor based on the materiality of the Mexico-U.S. border, we will extend the metaphor to other spaces (e.g., to cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, etc.) and to the complexity of national histories. Thus, immigration and the historical conditions creating the Latino population in this country will receive a high priority in our discussions. Consequently, and in addition to regular tri-weekly discussions of interested faculty, students and others, the Group will explore dialogue with U.S. Latino and Latin American scholars from the established fields (e.g., Chicano/a, Boricua/Nuyorican, Cubano Americano, and Caribbean studies) and from other emerging discourses. With an eye towards expanding and grounding research interests (on U.S.-occupied soil) and towards bolstering curricular offerings at Duke and UNC, the Group will seek to initiate consultations with other university communities where the boundaries are beginning to soften in favor of a borderlands approach, and where the borderlands is emerging as a viable metaphor and theory for cultural and other studies.

Given the existing universe of research interests in the Duke-UNC community, the Borderlands Working Group would actively seek to collaborate with other working groups in areas of common or overlapping interests: Gender and Praxis, Labor and Politics, Environment and Theatre. Certainly, the leading role of Chicanas in labor organizing and cultural studies, the vanguard creativity of Chicana playwrights, and the



exciting collaboration between the sister communities of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez in areas of the environment, would all be possible areas of future collaboration.

A promising and more immediate area of overlapping interest would be with the proposed Working Group on Cities and the Popular in Latin America. Again, the latter example above is but one possible area of mutual interest. (As with the Borderlands, so with the City: one is longer quite sure where it begins and ends, but one is confident that it does exist.) The Borderlands Working Group is proposing to ally itself with the Cities and the Popular Group to structure a series of joint meetings and workshops next year that will afford both groups a broader dialogue. The list of proposed visitors and events will be self-explanatory in this regard.

### **Meeting Schedule**

The Group will meet on a tri-weekly basis throughout the year, and on a staggered basis with our allied Cities and the Popular Working Group. The allied groups will host each other at least once a semester to continue our efforts at cross-fertilization and collaboration. Together with the allied group, we will sponsor a workshop/symposium towards the end of the spring semester.

### **Proposed Projects/Foci for 1998-99**

Fall Semester Focus I: The State and Future of U.S. Latino Studies

The Borderlands Working Group will invite an interdisciplinary group of U.S. Latino scholars to consult with us on the history, state and future of U.S. Latino studies, both within the U.S. and abroad (e.g., the Colegio de Mexico in Mexico City and Colegio de Estudios Fronterizos in Tijuana have mounted formidable research projects on U.S. Mexican American and Mexican immigrant populations). The Group will examine trends in Caribbean/Boricua and African American Diasporic studies to assess viable ways to structure intellectual inquiry, research projects and pedagogical/curricular approaches.

The possible speakers would include faculty directors of IUP-related research centers at CUNY, UT Austin, Stanford, UCLA, University of Florida, etc., and the Colegio de Estudios Fronterizos. Additional funding will be sought from the appropriate academic and decanal units of the University.

Fall Semester Focus II: Liberation and Praxis in the Borderlands

The Group will seek to capitalize on the two-week mid-November visit of Gustavo Gutierrez, Peruvian Jesuit, and the "father of liberation theology, who is scheduled to deliver the keynote address for the Divinity School and Chapel's Hispanic Awareness Days. The Group will plan a series of encuentros with Gutierrez that will allow for an analysis of liberation theology and liberatory praxis in such borderlands settings as North Carolina. We will seek to construct an encuentro that is interdisciplinary in focus, with a strong representation from current community service projects and agencies in North Carolina, thereby modeling a way in which academic and non-academic knowledges can inform each other. In addition, we would anticipate the participation of undergraduates actively involved in these projects. (Indeed a number of undergraduates would be keenly interested in the general thrust of the Group, and more so in light of the new curriculum diversity requirements.)

Spring Semester Focus I: Borderlands Theory, Media and Representation

The Group will seek to explore issues of media and representation of U.S. Latino populations by mainstream, alternative and ethnic media, both print and electronic. Essayist Richard Rodriguez (Pacific News Service), columnists Patricia and Roberto Gonzalez (Gannett), journalist Maria Hinojosa (Latino U.S.A./PNR), syndicator Charlie Erikson (Hispanic Link) would be among the visitors we would consider inviting. All have evidenced interest in the new Latino diaspora in the southern United States. In addition,

as the *Raleigh News and Observer* has undergone a very public editorial soul-searching over its recent immigrant reportage debacle, we will seek their participation as well. During the following year, the Group will seek to invite the architect of Borderlands Theory, Gloria Anzaldúa for a keynote address and workshop on the significance of the borderlands cultural paradigm for U.S. Latino and other populations.

**Spring Semester Focus II: The Cityscape as Borderlands**

In close consultation with the Cities and the Popular Working Group, the Borderlands Group will organize a workshop/symposium to explore the dual metaphor of city and borderlands in relation to the popular experience. The Borderlands Group will invite a recent chronicler of the urban reality (Mexico City-Tijuana-Los Angeles-Atlanta-Charlotte, etc.), the journalist Ruben Martinez (*The Other Side*) to speak on his current documentary project on the widening Mexican and Central American diaspora in the United States and in the Latin American city. Martinez' new book on the topic should be published by then. The Group will also explore co-sponsorship with the Center for Documentary Studies to support the multi-media components of Martinez' current project (which includes representations and description of Latino life in North Carolina). A second keynote speaker would be invited by the Cities and the Popular Working Group, and, if possible, a third to reflect the research and project interests of the vibrant UNC-Duke public health scholar community.

**Faculty Facilitators**

Duke: Walter Mignolo, Romance Studies  
 UNC: Lucila Vargas, Journalism

**Other Participating Faculty**

Ariel Dorfman, Literature, Duke  
 Tom Tweed, Religious Studies, UNC  
 Rosa Perelmuter, Romance Languages  
 Catherine Benamou, Literature, Film and Video Program, Duke

**Graduate Student Participants**

Tracy Brown, Cultural Anthropology, Duke  
 Marco Davila, Medicine, Duke  
 Susan Clifford, Social Work, UNC  
 Jon Rossini, English, Duke  
 Mendi Lewis, Literature, Duke  
 Julia Cardona Mack, Romance Languages, UNC  
 Jorge Maturano, Romance Studies, Duke  
 Sandy Smith-Nonini, Anthropology, UNC  
 Chris Plourde, Social Work, UNC  
 Daniel Ramirez, Religion, Duke  
 Steve Wuhs, Political Science, UNC  
 Paula Gildner, Public Health, UNC  
 Enrique Murillo, Education, UNC

**Budget**

4 speakers @ \$500 ea. (domestic U.S.)	\$2,000
<i>(co-sponsorship will be sought from academic and decanal units)</i>	
10 meetings @ \$50 ea (1 joint meeting @ \$100)	\$ 550
Photocopying, telephone, and other expenses	\$ 450
Grad Assistant	\$1,500
Spring workshop/symposium with allied Group	\$1,500
(allied Group requesting similar amount for total of \$3,000)	
	5,950
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>



**Duke-UNC Program in Latin American Studies**  
**Latino Borderlands Working Group**  
**Proposal for Renewal for the Academic Year, 1999-2000**

Cuando salimos pa' Kiansis  
Con una grande partida,  
Ah, qué camino tan largo  
No contaba con mi vida....

Cuando dimos visto a Kiansis  
Era puritito correr,  
Eran los caminos largos,  
Y pensaba yo en volver....

La madre de un aventurero  
Le pregunta al caporal:  
--Oiga, deme razón de mi hijo,  
Que no le he visto llegar  
--*El Corrido de Kiansas*

"...the oldest Border corrido that has come down in complete form is *El Corrido de Kiansis*, which records the novelty of the first cattle drives to Kansas in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Nicanor Torres, one of those from whom I have collected the ballad, was five years old when the Kansas Trail opened in 1867....It is the oldest true corrido that I know of, not only on the Border but in the Greater Mexican corpus as well."

--Americo Paredes, "*With His Pistol in His Hand*": *A Border Ballad and Its Hero*, 1958.

## **Introduction**

For the academic year 1998-99 the DUNCPLAS Latino Borderlands Working Group proposed to convene a series of interdisciplinary encounters around the experience and identity of the northernmost Latin American "nation" of the hemisphere. We suggested that that identity reflected at once both a grounded, territorialized experience as well as an imagined one constructed by diasporic communities busily re-assembling and articulating notions of selfhood in places as diverse as the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and the Piedmont of North Carolina. These new identity formations were first heralded by the balladeers of the last century, who composed and sang as they rode *vaquero* trails and railroads to points north (e.g., Kansas and Pennsylvania). Yet it was not until the pioneering work of folklorist Americo Paredes (UT Austin) that critical attention was paid to these Gramscian troubadours. Until then, scholars of American and Mexican folk musical cultures, writing from their respective centrally placed sites of scholarship had glossed over what for them were peripheral derivatives of cultural phenomena codified and essentialized elsewhere and beforehand. Paredes demonstrated the centrality of the 19th century border *corrido* to the development of the later Revolutionary corrido in Mexico proper and its parallel features to Scottish-English balladry and folklore. The borderlands, then, proved an apt and fertile site for intellectual inquiry about Mexican *and* American culture. Late-breaking news of Dr. Paredes' death challenges us to redouble our commitment to what we described last year as "a new frontier of inquiry for scholars involved in Latin American (and

other area) studies.” And like the trail-riders to Kansas of over a century ago, our adventure has had its share of rewards . . . and anxiety. Indeed, some head of cattle were inevitably lost along the way; hopefully, though, no mother had to query about a deceased son.

### **Review of Academic Year 1998-99**

The Working Group proposed the following four foci for the academic year 1998-99: 1) The State and Future of U.S. Latino Studies; 2) Liberation and Praxis in the Borderlands; 3) Latinos in the Borderlands: Theory, Media and Representation; and 4) The Cityscape as Borderlands. We were successful in addressing themes 1) through 3).

The first meeting of the Working Group was held at Duke on October 1. In addition to organizational matters, participants discussed a *Harvard Educational Review* article by Juan Flores (CUNY/Hunter College), "Latino Studies: New Contexts, New Concepts." Attendees: 6. The second meeting was held at UNC on October 28. We discussed a paper by Sylvia Pedraza (Sociology, University of Michigan), "The Contribution of Latino Studies to Social Science Research on Immigration, Race and Ethnicity in America." Attendees: 5. The discussions were geared towards the upcoming November activities of the Group.

With an eye towards expanding and grounding research interests and towards bolstering curricular offerings at Duke and UNC, on November 5 the Working Group sponsored a Consultancy on the State of Latino Studies, a dialogue with U.S. Latino scholars from the established fields (Chicano/a, Boricua/Nuyorican, Cubano Americano) in order to examine the history, state and future of U.S. Latino studies and to assess viable ways to structure intellectual inquiry. The event brought a select group of Latino scholars to Duke to take the pulse of Latino Studies nationwide and, given Duke-UNC's particular historical and geographical vantage point, suggest directions for research and curriculum development. Visitors included: Sylvia Pedraza, Sociology, University of Michigan; David Montejano, History, University of Texas at Austin (Director, Center for Mexican American Studies); Juan Flores, Sociology/Cultural Studies, Hunter College/CUNY (former Director, Centro de Estudios Puerto Riqueños); and David Traverzo, Religion/Latino Studies, Baruch College/CUNY. The conversations were interdisciplinary and trans-Latino in nature, with two focus sessions (with invited faculty, administrators and students--15 attendees) followed by a more public panel on "The State and Future of Latino Studies" (30 attendees).

The Consultancy also coincided (the same day) with the visit of Gustavo Gutierrez, Peruvian Jesuit, and the "father" of liberation theology, who delivered the keynote address for the Divinity School and University Chapel's Hispanic Awareness Days (100+ attendees). In spite of the constrained schedule, the visitors participated in a general discussion of liberation theology and liberatory praxis in such borderlands settings as North Carolina and New York, and joined Fr. Gutierrez and several local pastors for a meal the following day.

Given the Group's interest in fostering long-term intellectual interest in these topics among undergraduates, a group of undergraduate students (4 attendees) met with the visitors for breakfast. In addition, the visit itinerary included a very promising conversation on November 6 between Dr. Pedraza and the Chair and faculty of the Sociology department and a brown bag lunch at the UNC Center for International Studies with Juan Flores. Finally, the week's activities were capped off by co-sponsorship of the Duke visit on November 9 of Arturo Rodriguez, President of the United Farm Workers, who gave a public address in Page Auditorium (attendees: 200).

In tandem with the Working Group plans for next year (see below) the extensively documented record of the Consultancy will form the basis of a long-term thought piece/strategy paper on Latino Studies and Research that will be circulated to key decision makers in the faculty and administration. The current momentum (including a new faculty hire at Duke in the Literature program and Romance Studies department) around Latino issues will allow for a sustained exploration of the various issues raised during the Consultancy. Perhaps, though, it is at the individual level, of the budding or seasoned scholar that these conversations have their greatest impact. The following message from a Duke Masters (Liberal Studies) student was received on the eve of the Consultancy (which this student attended):

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

*I'm in Liberal Studies and this is my first year. I had planned to go to graduate school for Russian Literature but found that my interests had moved away from it and into Latin American literature and cultural theory. There are also some practical reasons for the shift. 1) Several Russian lit. professors told me that the field is not looking so good right now as far as jobs go and that there isn't much hope of it opening up any time soon. 2) If, at some point, I decide that I don't want to remain in academia, there are many opportunities available to serve the Hispanic community. There's a pressing need and my humanitarian impulses are flaring up. I decided to enter into the LS program at Duke and explore a bit before I make my final Ph.D. decision(s)...maybe final isn't the best word to use...:)...But since I am particularly interested in Mexican-American issues, I am not sure just how well Duke can serve me...I hope tomorrow will help make things a bit clearer for me. Cheers, \_\_\_\_\_*

This student subsequently enrolled in the Latin American Cultural Studies core course for spring semester, "Contact Zones and Latin America." Her odyssey, like that of the *Kiansis*-bound *vaqueros*, will be interesting to trace. Certainly folks at a different stage of their academic career found the Consultancy equally rich and provocative.

A scheduling difficulty caused a postponement of a planned Working Group session on North Carolina Latino farmworkers to be rescheduled for the spring semester. Unfortunately, the session leader moved to Atlanta in the interim. Nevertheless, she ably orchestrated a substitute presentation by Melinda Wiggins of Student Action for Farmworkers, who was co-teaching a

History department course on Farm worker Issues in North Carolina. Ms. Wiggins screened and led a discussion of a video documentary on the experience of Latinos in rural North Carolina (Siler City), "Cruzeros y Caminos." The meeting was held at Duke on February 24. Readings for discussion included "Slim Pickings in the Land of Dreams," an *Independent* article by Sandy Smith-Nonini on Latino farmworkers in North Carolina, and "Crossing Borders," chapter 3 in Leo Chavez' *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*. Given the Group's interest (fall focus no. 2) on the praxeological dimensions of theory, we also discussed current labor organizing (and boycott) efforts, salient issues in the state right now.

Although not scheduled as a formal meeting of the Working Group, several members attended the North American Studies-sponsored March 24 talk, "Mexico: A Protracted Transition," presented by Lorenzo Meyer, Political Science professor at el Colegio de Mexico and a Guggenheim Visiting Scholar at Stanford University. Earlier that day, Group members hosted Prof. Meyer for a lunch discussion on the voting franchise for Mexicans in the United States (attendees: 4).

With the praxeological concern in mind, the final Working Group meeting was held in Chapel Hill on March 31 to explore the topic "The Latino Religious Question in North Carolina and the Borderlands: Views from the Trenches." The Rev. Maria Teresa Unger-Palmer, pastor of the Iglesia Unida de Cristo of Chapel Hill, served as discussant and hosted the gathering at the United Church near the UNC campus. Importantly, during the weekend of March 26, the Iglesia Unida de Cristo congregation achieved full status as an autonomous UCC (United Church of Christ) congregation, with the visit of the UCC's national executive in charge of Latino ministries. Rev. The reading for the meeting was a forthcoming (Fall 1999) article in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, "Borderlands Praxis: The Immigrant Experience in Latino Pentecostal Churches."

Budgetary constraints prompted a scaling-back of ambitious plans and, especially, prevented the Group from following through on the planned fourth focus, The Cityscape as Borderlands, which was to dovetail with the third one, Latinos in the Borderlands: Theory, Media and Representation. Thus, plans for a joint activity with the Cities and the Popular Working Group did not coalesce. Fortunately, invitee Ruben Martinez, essayist/journalist, agreed to postpone his visit to Duke until the spring of 2000 (see below), a prospect to which we look forward.

### **Participants**

Along with continuing Faculty Co-Chairs Walter Mignolo and Lucila Vargas, the following attended or participated in at least one session of the working group, or were intimately involved in the preparation of a session (faculty attendees to the Consultancy included, among others, Duke faculty members Alberto Moreiras, Teresa Vilaros, Orin Starn, and Suzanne Shanahan; Rosa Perelmuter, Romance Languages/Studies, UNC, has requested to be listed as "Other Participating Faculty")

### **Students**

Ingrid Cubillos, Undergraduate, Duke

