

# Diversity Matters

A newsletter from the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center and the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs

## The Directors' Corner

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## National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 - October 15

Welcome to the first issue of Diversity Matters. This electronic newsletter is intended to keep you informed about issues, trends and practices pertaining to diversity in higher education.

Our first inaugural issue will focus on creating awareness, understanding and appreciation for Hispanic culture, during National Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15–Oct. 15. Each year, National Hispanic Heritage Month is intended to honor the diverse peoples of Spanish-speaking backgrounds who have come to the United States from more than 20 different countries.

Initiated by the U.S. Congress as Hispanic Heritage Week more than 20 years ago, the celebration has grown and, since 1989, includes the entire 31-day period.

Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence for five Latin-American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico achieved independence on Sept. 16 and Chile on Sept. 18.

The term Hispanic, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, refers to Spanish-speaking people in the United States of any race. On the 2000 census form, people of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin could identify themselves as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or “other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.” Today, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 37 million people in the United States are of Hispanic origin. That’s about ten percent of us!

Since our nation’s founding, Hispanic-Americans have played an integral role in our country’s exceptional story of success. Many Hispanics have greatly influenced America’s artistic, legal and political communities. Today, Hispanic culture continues to shape the American experience while simultaneously preserving its unique customs and traditions. All Americans, regardless of national origin, celebrate the vibrant Hispanic American spirit that influences our nation’s art, music, food, and faiths.

The strong ties that Hispanic-Americans maintain with their ancestral homeland remind us that the United States must pursue robust relations with its trading partners in Latin America and the Caribbean. The future of our hemisphere is closely tied to these relationships, and improving trade will play a vital role in building important links with our Hispanic neighbors.

The theme for this year’s observance of National Hispanic Heritage Month is, “honoring our past, surpassing our present and leading our future.”

We invite you to celebrate and pay tribute to the traditions, ancestry and achievements of our country’s proud heritage today, tomorrow and in the future.

*En celebración del aniversario ciento veinte cinco de MSU.*



## Hispanic Americans:

Honoring Our Past,  
Surpassing Our Present and  
Leading Our Future.

Mississippi State  
UNIVERSITY  
125 YEARS  
1878—2003

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability, or veteran status.



## Did You Know?

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, an Hispanic-American, is the commander in charge of the U.S. forces in Iraq.

The United States has the fourth highest Hispanic Population in the world (35,305,818).\*

There are 461 Hispanics in Starkville and the Golden Triangle area. MSU fall 2002 enrollment reflects 148 Hispanic students. \*\*

\* World Factbook 2000

\*\* Mississippi State University Office of Institutional Research

## English/Spanish Language Similarities

SPANISH	ENGLISH
armadillo	armadillo
banana	banana
cafetería	cafeteria
colores	colors
chocolate	chocolate
mapa	map
mucho	much
no	no
números	numbers
patio	patio
rosa	rose
tomate	tomato

## Hispanic trivia

### From where do some Hispanic-Americans trace their culture?

Indigenous peoples of the Americas: Arawaks (Puerto Rico), the Aztecs (Mexico), the Incas (South America), the Maya (Central America), the Tainos (in Cuba, Puerto Rico and other places). Also, Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World.

## Wow! facts (U.S. Census Bureau)

The **Hispanic population in the U.S.** was estimated at 35.3 million or 12.5 percent in 2000.

Hispanic-Americans accounted for 40 percent of the increase in the **nation's total population** during the 1990-2000 decade.

The **median age for the Hispanic-American** population in 2000 was 25.8 compared to 35.3 for the total U.S. population.

The majority of Hispanic-Americans living in the U.S. are of **Mexican origin** (58.5 percent).

The proportion of Hispanics who have attained at least a high school education range from **73 percent for Cubans to 52 percent for Mexicans**. Overall, 57 percent of Hispanic-Americans are high school graduates.

## Links to hispanic education sites

[The National Register of Historic Places](#)

[Celebrating Hispanic Heritage](#)

[Education World](#)

[Flags of Hispanic Countries](#)

[The Hispanic Population-Census 2000 Brief](#)

[The White House's Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans](#)

[Do Hispanic, Latino and Chicano Mean the Same Thing?](#)

[Hispanics Are Nation's Largest Minority](#)