

Toward a Statewide Agenda on Latino Issues in Michigan

*A Summary Report on the
Statewide Summit on Latino
Issues in Michigan*



Rubén O. Martinez

April, 2010

*Hosted by the
Julian Samora Research Institute
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan*



**Committed to the
generation, dissemination and application of knowledge**

Preface

The Julian Samora Research Institute is pleased to provide this summary of the *Summit on Latino Issues in Michigan: Toward a Statewide Agenda* held in East Lansing, Michigan, on July 31, 2009.

This summit represents the first phase of an effort to galvanize Latino-informed leaders and provide an opportunity for them to identify, prioritize and begin to work toward solutions to the challenges facing Latinos in Michigan.

Nearly 60 individuals representing different institutional sectors and geographic areas of Michigan came together for one day to work on identifying and prioritizing the challenges facing Latinos in Michigan.

Latinos have been within the present-day boundaries of the country longer than any other group except Native Americans. In 1541, Francisco Coronado held the first Christian mass in the interior of North America as he searched for the Seven Cities of Gold; it took place in present-day western Kansas three centuries before Americans settled the area.

Over the centuries, Latinos established new communities, developed the primary sector of the economy, expanded trade markets, managed forests and natural resources, and maintained law and order.

Michigan's own economy, especially the agricultural sector, has been and is dependent on Latino labor. Unfortunately, Michigan neither recognizes nor celebrates the contributions Latinos have made and continue to make to the state's well-being. Instead, intentionally and unintentionally, barriers are erected that exclude Latinos from full participation in the institutional life of the state. These barriers constitute many of the challenges facing Latinos in Michigan.

This summary of the Summit on Latino Issues in Michigan encourages continued work and follow through on the commitments made at the summit. Public attention to these issues is necessary to improve the quality of life for Latinos and all citizens in Michigan and the United States. Transformation is the watchword if progress is to be made; from the personal to the institutional, transformational change is required to make Michigan a more inclusive state.

Rubén O. Martinez, Director,
Julian Samora Research Institute
Michigan State University

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Laying the Groundwork	1
The Summit Process	3
Part I: Top Ten Issues Identified	5
Part II: Ways to Address Issues	13
Part III: Where do we go from here?.....	19
Appendix A: Summit Participants.....	21
Appendix B: Summit Agenda.....	23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summit participants identified the following issues as key challenges for Latinos in Michigan and provided some suggestions for how they can be addressed.

Education. This aspect of individual development is essential for understanding and participating in society, and is the key to success in most if not all areas of life. Currently, Michigan's education systems do not have the cultural capacity to address the educational needs of Latino youth, leading to alienation and high dropout rates among the group.

Immigration Rights. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and public hostility toward Latino communities have resulted in widespread profiling, negative impacts on families and children, and violations of civil and human rights. Consequently, Latino communities live in fear of enforcement agencies. Restoration of basic rights congruent with an emerging global reality is essential for the protection of all persons and the preservation of a free and democratic society.

Health and healthcare. These are fundamental needs of all communities. Besides the lack of health insurance, the lack of cultural competence by providers and the absence of bilingual information materials are significant barriers to accessing information and services.

Civic Engagement. Civic and community participation are hallmarks of U.S. democracy. The political incorporation of Latino immigrants is essential for their full participation in the nation's democratic structures. Education programs and bilingual information materials are essential for facilitating this process.

Media Portrayal of Latinos. When not ignoring them altogether, the mass media promote negative stereotypes of Latinos and thereby provoke prejudice, hostility and discrimination against Latinos in the larger society. In a democracy, objectivity is the "burden" of a free press.

Economic Development. Information and education programs, especially in the areas of financing and marketing, are critical for promoting and supporting Latino entrepreneurship,

Jobs and Employment. Workforce development through education and training, and equal and fair treatment in the workplace, are critical for the full incorporation of Latinos in the labor force and for harnessing their full productive potential.

Latino-focused Statewide Network. Research on Latino issues and a robust statewide network that can mobilize community resources are important for supporting, advocating for and initiating policy development strategies that address the needs of Latino communities.

Gender Relations. Leadership opportunities for Latinas are crucial for addressing relations among Latinas and Latinos in the long run. Additionally, issues of domestic violence and abuse must be addressed in culturally effective ways.

Civil Rights and Discrimination. Violations of civil rights and racial and ethnic discrimination diminish the life chances of Latinos and negatively impact entire communities. The nation as a whole fails to harness the potential of its citizens and loses ground in an increasingly competitive global environment.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to MSU Provost Kim Wilcox who welcomed participants to the summit, acknowledged the importance of the event, and provided encouragement to pursue solutions to the multitudes of difficult issues facing Latinos in Michigan.

Thanks also goes to the Latino Summit participants who took the time from their busy schedules to come together, to share ideas and discuss critical issues concerning Latinos in Michigan. Thanks, also, to them for their commitment to a better future by agreeing to carry on with the work begun at the Summit. The ideas and strategies that emerged from the Summit will serve as the foundation for ongoing discussions on community development and improvement, and policy development and implementation initiatives.

Introduction

Latinos are the largest ethnic minority group in the nation and the most underserved, specifically in the areas of education, health care, mental health services, and workforce development. At the same time, Latinos are subjected to racial profiling by law enforcement and homeland security forces and endure Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids at their workplaces and in their communities. In addition, anti-affirmative action referenda such as the one passed in Michigan has fueled, among other things, an anti-Latino climate that has led to increased restrictions on obtaining driver's licenses and a flurry of legislative initiatives that, if passed, would further negatively impact Latino and immigrant communities.

As Michigan and the nation pull out of the current economic recession, every effort must be made to ensure that Latinos are not left behind; that they have educational and workforce development opportunities and access to health care and public services that are free of ethnic hostility and discrimination. If these goals are to be accomplished, another goal must also be achieved: the Latino community itself must become a force through active participation in civic affairs.

The Julian Samora Research Institute of Michigan State University hosted the Summit on Latino Issues as a first step toward identifying the challenges facing Latino communities both for research purposes, including policy development, and public awareness. Bringing Latino-informed leaders together to identify and reach consensus on the issues that are most pressing and determining how these issues can be addressed is the easiest task. The more difficult tasks are promoting an inclusive, rational public discourse that includes Latinos and promoting their incorporation into the mainstream of institutional life.

Laying the Groundwork

Michigan State University Provost Kim Wilcox opened the Summit and welcomed participants. He asked, "Why have this summit today?" and noted the following facts:

- The Latino population is the fastest-growing major population segment in the United States.
- Latinos are the most harassed by the government due to immigration.
- Most farmworkers in Michigan are Latino.
- One-third of adult Latinos in this country do not have a high school diploma.
- We cannot look to the future without looking to Latinos and the ways in which they will shape society.

Dr. Rubén Martínez, Director of the Julian Samora Research Institute, provided an overview of the current status of Latinos in Michigan and the challenges they face. He noted the strengths found in the Latino population today, and the hurdles standing before them.

Latinos as a political force

Michigan is the eighth largest state in terms of population, with just over 10 million people, although it may soon fall under that figure if people continue to leave the state. The Latino population for Michigan as of July 1, 2008 was estimated at 413,827, representing about 4.0% of Michigan's total population. In the 2008 presidential election, Latinos comprised about 2% of total registered voters. The majority of the Latino population in Michigan is of Mexican origin (73%). Wayne County has the largest Latino population in Michigan. Latinos represent 5% of the Wayne County population, which was 99,276 of 1,949,929 in 2008, an increase of 27% from 2000. Of the counties with higher concentrations of Latino population (> 10,000 population), Kent county has the fastest growing Latino population. The Latino population there increased by 42% from 40,644 in 2000 to 57,691 in 2008. Potentially, this growth makes them an important swing vote in tight political races not only in key counties, but across the state.

Latinos as an economic force

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2002 Survey of Business Owners, Michigan's 9,841 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$3.3 billion and employed 15,930 people. Latinos also wielded more than \$8.8 billion in consumer purchasing power, which is an increase of nearly 304% since 1990.

Challenges facing Latinos in Michigan

In the United States, Latinos are the second largest ethnic group (next to White Americans) and the most underserved by the nation's institutions.

In Michigan, Latinos have a long history as workers and residents but are often taken for granted as farmworkers and members of agricultural communities. They are a small proportion of the population, and this has tended to keep them invisible and non-threatening until recently.

Current anti-immigrant fervor has put the Latino population on Michigan's public consciousness despite the fact that the state has one of the lowest numbers of unauthorized immigrant workers (approximately 65,000 or 1.3%) in the nation.

In addition to a hostile climate, Latinos tend to face the following challenges:

- Poverty, including "information poverty."
- Low educational attainment.
- Lack of emphasis on multicultural competence by the dominant culture.
- Lack of cooperation among Latinos at the statewide level.

The results of the summit are provided in the remainder of this report. It is hoped that it will provide direction to persons interested in moving the state and the nation toward a more inclusive and just society. It is also intended to encourage persons interested in improving the well being of Latinos in Michigan to work together to improve their quality of life and that of their children.

The Summit Process

The Summit was designed as a deliberative process to facilitate constructive dialogue among participants throughout the event. This was accomplished by facilitating two general working sessions with participant presentations of the sessions' results.

The morning session was organized into working groups consisting of people of diverse interests and affiliations. Each workgroup was assigned the same task: identify and agree upon the top five to seven issues facing Latinos in Michigan. A speaker or speakers from each group then presented their list to the larger group. The lists were recorded on newsprint and displayed for all to view. After reviewing the displayed lists, participants then prioritized issues by voting for the issues they thought were most important. The ten issues with the most votes were presented to the full group rank ordered by the number of votes received.

The following are the top ten topical issues that were identified by summit participants presented in rank order:

- 1) Education
- 2) Immigration Rights
- 3) Health and Healthcare
- 4) Civic Engagement
- 5) Media Portrayal of Latinos
- 6) Economic Development
- 7) Jobs and Employment
- 8) Latino-focused Statewide Network
- 9) Gender Relations
- 10) Civil Rights and Discrimination

Each of these is presented and discussed in this report.





Part I: Top Ten Issues

1) Education

A total of 104,000 Latinos students were enrolled in K-12 Michigan schools, representing about approximately 6% of all students in Michigan school districts. Latino youth have the highest dropout rates in Michigan (29%). About 58% of Latinos graduated from high school in the 2007-2008 school year (Michigan NCLB State Report Card 2007-2008). Latino students' mathematics test scores in 2009 and reading scores in 2007 were lower than those of non-Hispanic White 4th and 8th graders. Latinos in the graduating class of 2009 also had lower average scores on ACT and SAT tests than non-Hispanic Whites.

Summit participants were clear in their view that education is the cornerstone for the development of the individual and the community. Without education, there cannot be full participation in society. Elimination of the education gap is viewed as the responsibility of the schools, which must develop the capacity to meet the education needs of Latino students.

The following dimensions of education were seen as critical issues that must be addressed:

- Harness potential of each individual using informal and formal education,
- Educational equity and participation reform,
- Achievement gap,
- Multicultural curriculum development and implementation,
- High school retention (high dropout rates/low graduation rates),
- College matriculation/retention/completion,
- Financial assistance to attend college/training,
- Support for English as a second language,
- Bilingual education options,
- Technology skills gap,
- Segregation and discrimination in the classroom,
- English-only tests,
- Early childhood education,
- Institutional accountability,
- Parent involvement, family support and accountability,
- Negative social perceptions and attitudes by school personnel.

2) Immigration Rights

About 6% of Michigan's population is foreign born. Of the state's foreign-born population, 18% are Latinos. Among Latinos, approximately 26% are foreign-born in Michigan, compared to the same measure at the national level (38.1%). Immigrants are attracted by the demand for workers in construction, manufacturing, service industries, and agriculture. Immigrants are also attracted to new places by housing and high-quality of life issues (e.g., schools, low crime rates, etc.). Many immigrants have settled in the some of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country while others settled in places that are unaccustomed to receiving immigrants.

According to Audrey Singer, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, the failure of federal government to pass immigration reform in a timely manner seems to have spurred local immigrant policy activism. In 2008, 1300 state laws were introduced that are immigrant and immigrant-related; 206 became law in 41 states; and countless local jurisdictions across the country have introduced local laws. Local response and legislation varies. Some have adopted restrictive actions (e.g., hostile, strict enforcement strategies) while others have embraced more inclusive policies (e.g., tolerance and accommodation).

Government and public hostility toward Latino communities stemming from anti-immigration sentiments and the protectionism arising as a response to globalization can result in violations of civil and human rights and tend to occur widely where Latinos are perceived as a threat to the American order. Issues that require attention include:

Anti-Latino profiling by ICE and law enforcement officials,
Cross-jurisdiction enforcement of immigration laws increase profiling and fear,
Family break up by government officials,
Lack of undocumented immigrant services,
No distinction between citizens and non-citizens during ICE raids,
Fear (lack of trust) of public entities,
Need for legislative reform (DREAM Act),
Negative perceptions of immigration.

3) Health and Healthcare

Health disparities persist across race/ethnic groups. According to the *2008 National Health Care Disparities Report*:

Large disparities for Latinos remain in new AIDS cases despite significant decreases across groups. The rate of new AIDS cases was more than three times as high for Hispanics as for non-Hispanics Whites.

Latinos were twice more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to have children whose parents reported poor communications with health care providers.

Latinos were twice more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to have pregnant women who do not receive prenatal care in the first trimester.

Latinos did worse when compared to non-Hispanic Whites on the following measures:

- Preventive services: adults age 50 and over who received colorectal cancer screening;
- Acute illness: patients with tuberculosis who complete treatment within 12 months of initiation of treatment;
- Chronic disease management: adult hemodialysis patients with adequate dialysis (urea reduction 65% or higher);

- Patient safety: adult age 65 and over who received potentially inappropriate prescription medicines.

In terms of health care access, the percent of uninsured Latinos in 2008 at the national level was 30.7, with 14.6 million uninsured. In contrast, that for non-Hispanic Whites was 10.8%, or 21.3 million uninsured. In Michigan, the uninsured rate among Latinos was 25% in 2008, compared to 10.1% among non-Hispanic Whites.

Like education, good health is fundamental and indispensable for a good quality of life and for effective participation in life generally and in community institutions. Health education and access to healthcare are essential for all communities. Health disparities in relation to Latino populations are many and varied. Programmatic efforts are needed in all areas, especially those listed below:

Health Needs:

- Bilingual information/education,
- Education on healthy food/diet and fitness,
- Access and affordability of healthy food (fresh vs. processed),
- Disease management education,
- Diabetes prevention and management,
- Obesity prevention,
- Heart disease prevention and treatment,
- Child/senior health improvement,
- Family planning services,
- Safe and clean housing,
- Violence prevention education,
- Service for undocumented immigrants to safeguard public health,
- Health impact studies on consumption, exposure, and residual effects of previous residences.

Healthcare Issues:

- Lack of access,
- Inequity of treatment,
- Expectations,
- Cultural competency,
- Provider education,
- Bilingual providers,
- Uninsured families.

4) Civic Engagement

In the 2008 presidential election, Latinos had a lower electoral participation rate than non-Hispanic Whites or Blacks. Latinos had a 2% higher electoral participation rate than Asians. In 2008, about 50% of eligible Latino voters (citizens 18 years and over) voted. Comparatively, 66% of eligible non-Hispanic Whites, 65% of Blacks, and 48% of Asians participated in the presidential election, respectively. Some of the Latino non-participation in the elections can be accounted for

by the factors of non-citizenship and youth. In Michigan, approximately 80% of Latinos are citizens, and about 48% of Latino eligible voters participated in the presidential election in 2008. In general, immigrants are more optimistic about the political context than are native-born citizens.

Generally, the Latino population in the United States faces a remarkably different political and social environment than that of the non-Hispanic White Americans. They tend to encounter prejudice and discrimination, ethnic minority vote dilution, and exclusion from the political process.

Political incorporation of Latinos into the communities in which they reside is necessary for full participation in democratic institutions and the larger society. The empowerment of the growing Latino community will be realized only if they participate more fully and effectively in the political arena. Issues include:

External Political Challenges:

- Lack of Latino representatives in state and federal agencies,
- Policies/procedures that perpetuate and support institutional racism and racist actions,
- Corruption of political systems in the US and countries of origin,
- Lack of authentic dialogue on race and Latinos at state and national levels,
- Lack of support that promotes issues important to Latinos.

Internal Political Challenges:

- Political fragmentation of Latino communities. Need Pan-Latino collaboration recognizing Latino diversity,
- Lack of statewide network to articulate issues,
- Disconnected from Latino advocacy groups,
- Lack of awareness of rights,
- Lack of a common agenda and action,
- Lack of communication in the Latino community,
- Lack of full Census participation.

Political participation is needed to:

- Identify policies and procedures,
- Dissect and respond to issues,
- Build a cohesive agenda,
- Shape legislation,
- Develop leadership from within,
- Promote voter registration,
- Hold elected officials accountable.

5) Media Portrayal of Latinos

Racial and ethnic minorities are portrayed differently in the mass media. Anyone can discern the different patterns of portrayal across African American, Asian American, Latino, Native American, and White American characters in TV advertisements, for instance. Latinos, although they comprise more than 15% of the U.S. population, are nearly absent among speaking characters in commercials. The tendency is to portray Latinos in TV ads either as props for active others or as young adults engaging in sexually alluring poses. In the news, however, the media

continually portray Latinos in ways that reinforce negative stereotypes and evoke racial sentiments linked to prejudice, hostility and discrimination. Criminality, low educational achievement, and drug activities, for example, are common among the portrayals of Latinos by the media. Concerns include:

- More Latinos are needed in mass media (journalism/news),
- Career mentors are needed for young Latinos in the media industry,
- Technology access is important for all Latinos,
- Balanced portrayals by media are needed to emphasize successes of Latinos,
- Identify positive events on a continuous basis for a non-sensitive media.

6) Economic Development

Using averages for the years 2006 through 2008, about 14% of the population in Michigan was considered poor (i.e., below 100% of the official poverty threshold). About 25% of Latinos in Michigan compared to 11% of non-Hispanic Whites were poor. The median household income in Michigan was estimated at \$49,694. For Latinos, the median household income was estimated at \$39,077. Comparatively, non-Hispanic White households had a median income of \$52,954. About 5% of Latinos were self-employed in their own business, professional practice, or farm. By comparison, about 10% of non-Hispanic Whites were self-employed.

Economic development is important for the success of all communities. The underlying conditions facing Latinos as workers and as business owners must be recognized and addressed. Poverty of information is related to the many key issues listed below affecting Latinos as they strive to open and build businesses.

- Business development/,business opportunities,
- Financing opportunities,
- Education for understanding American business practices (hand shake vs. contract),
- Training development,
- Financial planning and management,
- Access to services,
- Few Latinos in state and federal regulatory agencies,
- Foreclosures,
- Knowledge and availability of information in Spanish.

7) Jobs and Employment

According to data from the American Community Survey, between 2006 and 2008, Latinos in Michigan were more likely than any other group to participate in the labor force (69%). Comparatively, 64% of non-Hispanic Whites were in labor force. About 9% of Latinos 16 years and over were unemployed compared to 5% of non-Hispanic Whites were unemployed. Occupational segregation, however, is still prevalent, with Latinos concentrated at the lower end of the occupational structure.

Workforce development through education and training, and equal and fair treatment in the workplace are critical for the full incorporation of Latinos in the labor force and for harnessing

their full productive potential. This is particularly important in the context of a broad demographic shift in which the Latino population continues to grow and the Baby Boomer cohorts begin to retire from the labor force. Issues include:

- Lack of advancement,
- Access to good jobs,
- Employment opportunities,
- Workforce training,
- High unemployment,
- Poverty across the life cycle “cradle to grave,”
- Culture of personal gain (crew leaders, farmers, non-profits),
- Strengthen Equal Employment Opportunity and the climate it creates,
- Workers’ Compensation reform.

8) Latino-focused Statewide Network

Research on Latino issues and a robust statewide network that can mobilize community resources are important for supporting, advocating for and initiating policy development strategies that address the needs of Latino communities. In particular, lack of access to official statistics in Michigan by race/ethnicity presents an immense problem for understanding the status of Latinos in the state. Other concerns include:

- Migrant workers’ exploitation by farmers as well as crew leaders (many of whom may be Latino),
- State and federal responses to needs of Latino communities,
- Non-profits organizations responses to needs of Latino communities,
- Disconnection among Latino advocates.

9) Gender Relations

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, is a gender-based crime with women being more likely to experience domestic violence than men. Racial/ethnic minorities and immigrants experience domestic violence at disproportionate rates. According to the National Violence against Women Survey (NVAWS), 23.4% of Latina women had been domestic violence victims in their lifetime.

Immigrant women often remain in violent relationships because of their citizenship status. Abusers may threaten to have the victim deported by reporting their undocumented status to the Department of Homeland Security. Many immigrant women also face obstacles such as language barriers, a lack of understanding of the U.S. legal system, and cultural customs when attempting to leave violent relationships.

Gender issues must be considered as the movement to improve the status of the Latino population proceeds. Gender relations and the importance for Latinas to fully participate in every aspect of life cannot be ignored or deemed divisive and destructive to the community. Current problems identified include the following:

Few women in leadership roles,
Family structures inhibit women's professional successes,
Domestic abuse.

10) Civil Rights and Discrimination

Violations of civil rights and racial and ethnic discrimination diminish the life chances of Latinos and negatively impact entire communities. Not only does discrimination impact the quality of life through myriad forms of exclusion, it produces stress in daily life that can produce depression and low levels of satisfaction with life. At the same time, however, the nation as a whole fails to harness the full potential of its citizens and loses ground in an increasingly competitive global environment. Moreover, racism leads to mediocrity by limiting the talent pool and relying on the less talented to fill key positions, ultimately negatively impacting organizational performance. Key areas that require attention are:

Environment of social injustice,
Employment discrimination,
Profiling (i.e. Beer summit) and retaliation,
Intimidation and segregation,
Hate crimes (Michigan third highest in the nation) and bias incidents,
Disproportionate rate of incarceration of Latinos, especially youth,
Lack of equal enforcement,
Need for authentic dialogue on race generally and Latinos in Michigan and the US
in particular,
Migrant worker issues,
Health (pesticides),
Housing.



Part II: Ways to Address Issues

The afternoon work session focused on identifying ways to address the challenges identified during the morning session. Participants worked in small groups according to the issue of their interest. Workgroups were asked to address the following four questions as a means of determining the best ways by which to address the challenges within their topic of interest.

- Why is this issue important?
- To what degree can we control or influence it?
- What resources are needed to address it?
- What policy directions are important for addressing it?

A summary of the discussions' results is provided below.

1) Education

Education (both formal and informal) leads to success in all aspects of life. It is the foundation for effective involvement and success in nearly every aspect of life. In order to have an impact on education, the Latino community must engage parents in the education of their children. This requires empowering them through an understanding of their rights, school policies, and ways to engage their children in educational activities.

It is important to develop leaders within the community, conduct authentic assessments to re-evaluate schools and curricula, and serve as advocates on behalf of Latino children in the school system. It is also important to consider alternative schools with support programs for addressing culture shock for newcomers.

Finally, efforts must be made to increase awareness of the issues among legislators, develop capacity to influence policy at the state level, eliminate institutional exclusionary practices that limit Latino education, and reject reverse racism as a viable ideology in a context of institutionalized racism.

2) Immigration Rights

Immigration rights relates to all other key issues. Legal versus illegal status affects such areas as insurance (i.e. health insurance qualification based on illegal or legal status), eligibility for higher education admission, and government assistance programs. Ultimately, it is also connected to human rights issues.

Immigration has a *completely* legislative solution. Immigration reform can be addressed and influenced through political organizing and advocacy. How much the community is willing to compromise is an issue. Some components that are not legislative must be addressed at an administrative level. Latinos and other immigrants must raise their voices to the level of the U.S. President's office.

3) Health and Healthcare

Quality of life is affected if health is affected. There is a high percentage of diabetes, heart disease and obesity in the Latino population. Obesity in children is a problem of particular concern.

Poor health is caused and exacerbated by a variety of factors. Some of these factors include but are not limited to:

- Minimal or no health insurance,
- Poor neighborhoods with few exercise and recreational facilities,
- Lack of access to fresh produce in poor communities,
- Lack of bilingual, culturally relevant health education, prevention and wellness programs,
- Few bilingual health service providers,
- Lack of access to quality healthcare.

Implications for the healthcare system:

- Quality interpreter services should be made available,
- Health providers at all levels should be encouraged to learn a second language,
- Health and medical curricula need to address cultural and linguistic issues in order to adequately serve the Latino community,
- Latinos working in the health services professions provide models and mentors for youth and should encourage youth to consider careers in the health professions,
- Community education is important for providing critical information on how to access services and resources (i.e. Medicaid, Health Department),
- Encourage healthcare providers to volunteer their services in low cost/free clinics, or provide pro bono services in their offices,
- Grants and research on Latino health can provide current data on their health status and insights into effective prevention practices and treatments.

Policy implications:

- Access to healthcare must be universal,
- Adequate financial support must be provided for free and low cost clinics,
- Medicaid reimbursement rates must be increased,
- Dental and mental health services must be part of insurance coverage,
- Foreign healthcare providers should be recertified more quickly after entering the US.

4) Civic Engagement

The Latino voice is needed in policy and decision-making. Michigan is void of a Latino political network and consequently of a Latino voice and advocacy. Latinos need to influence and engage in politics regardless of the party.

Latinos need to register to vote, organize around issues, and become educated about the U.S. political system so that communities can share in the benefits of Latino activism. Resources to address these needs include bilingual materials and trainings to teach “civic engagement” within Latino communities and neighborhoods.

Latinos with political savvy will be informed voters and more able to hold politicians accountable in policymaking.

5) Media Portrayal of Latinos

Media portrayals of Latinos are, for the most part, negative. This affects the perceptions of the general public, perpetuates stereotypes, and has a deleterious impact on the self-image of Latino youth. National news impacts local perceptions (e.g., border stories, immigration issues, etc.) of events.

Community pressure on media outlets is needed to provide more positive stories of Latino culture and people. Advertisers need to be made aware of the population shift and the increase in Latino consumers nationwide. More Latinos need to be employed in all aspects of the media world.

The community can respond to negative and unfair portrayals through boycotts and advocacy and education efforts. The Hispanic media (*Univision, LaVoz . . .*) can and should highlight critical policy and community issues. Targets for such efforts include the Big Three television networks (NBC/ABC/CBS), and multi-media outlets such as cable and satellite.

6) Economic Development

Economic development is extremely important to Latino entrepreneurs striving to succeed in the US. Support systems are needed that will reach Hispanics and provide services. These include Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), outreach centers at colleges and universities, and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Resources, referrals and education must be available and accessible to Latinos so that they can learn about U.S. business practices and formalities, business planning, business laws and regulations, zoning and licensing requirements and so on. Latinos also need to understand today’s technology and current successful marketing strategies.

Resources created or translated into Spanish, and bilingual support should be made available as a matter of standard practice. State/federal regulatory offices that do not have bilingual materials or funds to publish them can post them on a website and print them as needed. This should be done in other languages also. Cultural competence of government and regulatory personnel is important. Providing early exposure to entrepreneurship for Latino youth can be accomplished through the creation of a Latino Junior Achievement initiative.

Finally, forming coalitions with other cultural groups (i.e. Arabic) with similar needs will provide the political and economic pressure necessary to obtain the state and federal multicultural focus needed.

7) Jobs and Employment

People need to obtain/provide the basic needs of life for themselves and their families, as well as their communities. Policymakers must ensure that aid is provided for persons to reinvent and retrain themselves as workers who can meet future industries' and employers' needs. At the same time, Latinos must change and develop a mentality or philosophy of "creating their own opportunities." *Tienen que ayudarse para que otros les ayuden.* Latino representation at the policymaking and implementation tables is important to influencing federal, state and local governments as well as corporate, management and union practices. Resources required to accomplish change includes leadership training, networking, advocacy and communities. Financial clout and a political voice are needed to influence policy makers.

8) Latino-focused Statewide Network

A statewide network to support and initiate advocacy in the policy arena is needed to provide a venue for working collaboratively to improve the status of Latinos in Michigan. This is an initiative that will require commitment and due diligence, but can result in long-term benefits for Latinos in Michigan. Such an effort calls for true collaboration, one without hidden agendas. Resources such as today's technology make it possible for electronic statewide meetings (webinars and conference calls), at little or no cost. The Network can aid in developing leadership and providing training for Latinos interested in participating in advocacy/education efforts. Research projects conducted by institutes such as JSRI provide useful information that can support networking and advocacy that is data-based. Pooling resources to support research efforts with grants, endowments, gifts and sponsorships can result in additional studies on Latino life in Michigan and the United States; dissemination of results can influence public policy and opinion and impact how non-Latinos view and interact with the Latino community.

9) Gender Relations

Latino family traditions and culture have historically proven to strengthen the community and family by following a unique set of norms and codes. However, it is important to acknowledge the drawback of a culture when it creates adverse effects that hinder equity for both men and women. The issue of gender bias and inequality affects the degree of opportunities in all societal institutions.

Gender-based relations differ from gender-based equity in the respect that gender equity can be legislated and enforced; gender relations cannot. This leads to the premise that one can be addressed systemically while the other one falls within the realm of social discourse. Leadership development may provide the path to development, advocacy and implementation of legislation that addresses gender inequity. Affirmative action must once again be discussed in Michigan. Gender relations must fall on the shoulders of the community by utilizing the strengths of our cultural heritage, such as religion, respect for family networks etc., to address Latino vs. Latina roles. These traits and values can be conducive to positively influence all U.S. institutions. Resources important to addressing gender issues include research, funding, media, role models and curriculums for training.

10) Civil Rights and Discrimination

Racism is alive and well in the United States. It impacts every aspect of life, resulting in a segregated society that denies opportunities to what will soon be the largest population segments in the nation. Moreover, backlash by members of the dominant group diminishes equal rights in everyday life.

In order to control and minimize racism, effective laws must be enacted and enforced. Bureaucracies and regulatory agencies must be made more efficient and effective in becoming multicultural organizations the no longer privilege White Americans. Media must be pressured to provide accurate depictions of Latinos.

Effective Latino civil rights advocacy organizing is important to the creation of better laws and identifying resources for enforcement (effective regulatory agencies).



Part III: Where do we go from here?

A modular approach was suggested for addressing key issues. That is, each issue or a cluster of issues could be addressed by separate groups, rather than one group trying to address all of them. Specific suggestions for continuing the work begun at the Summit include:

- Creating an organizational vehicle for action,
- Committing to and participating in a statewide network (individuals and organizations),
- Holding regular meetings to keep communications active and individuals engaged,
- Inventorying organizations' activities and work to coordinate activities statewide,
- Developing thematic groups and network,
- Adding more brain power by soliciting the involvement of those who did not attend the Summit,
- Communicating success stories to the media,
- Communicating with legislators,
- Presenting the Summit report to key legislators.



APPENDIX A
Summit Participants

Sonia Acosta	Roberto Jara
Max Anguiano	Raphael Jimenez
Reniero Araoz	Eric Juenke
Diana Ariza	Sergio Keck
Paul Babladelis	Guillermo Lopez
Norma Baptista	Josefina Martinez
Kimberly Bodfish	Ruben Martinez
Ricardo Briones	Rubén O. Martinez
Sandra L. Cade	Steven R. Miller
John J. Castillo	Rachael Moreno
John Roy Castillo	Richard Olivarez
Nate Cihlar	Evangelina Palma-Ramirez
Juan Cruz	Argelio “Ben” Perez
Maria Enriquez	Karla Peterkoski
Angelita Espino	Elva Reyes
Aquino-Hughes Eusehia	Rudy Reyes
Hiram Fitzgerald	Jose Reyna
Alberto M. Flores	Michelle S. Rodgers
Luis Garcia	Andrea Rodriguez
Rick Garcia	Mike Rodriguez
Robert Gardner	Nino Rodriguez
Steve Gold	Cynthia Rooker
Lee Gonzales	Maria A. Salinas
Paulo Gordillo	Carlos Sanchez
Paulette Granberry Russell	Maria Starr
Julio Guerrero	Thomas K. Thornburg
Christina Guzman	Marcelina Treviño-Savala
Olga Hernandez-Patino	Shelli Weisberg
Elena Herrada	



APPENDIX B

Statewide Summit on Latino Issues
Julian Samora Research Institute
Michigan State University
Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center
Big Ten A Room
July 31, 2009

AGENDA

7:30-8:30 AM	Registration
8:30 AM	Welcoming Remarks – Provost Kim Wilcox
8:45 AM	Program Overview – Rubén Martínez, JSRI Director
9:00 AM	Issues Identification and Prioritization by Group
10:00 AM	Break
10:15 AM	Group Reports (7 minutes per group)
11:30 AM	Issue Prioritization by Dot Voting
12:00 PM	Networking Lunch (Big Ten B Room)
1:00 PM	Priority Review
1:15 PM	Best Ways to Address Issues by Topical Groups
2:15 PM	Break
2:30 PM	Group Reports (7 minutes per group)
3:30 PM	Next Steps – Where do we go from here?
3:50 PM	Closing Comments – Rubén Martínez, JSRI Director
4:00 PM	Adjournment



**DTE Energy
Foundation**

The Julian Samora Research Institute is part of the College of Social Science at Michigan State University.
Visit its webpage at: www.jsri.msu.edu

Publication of this report was made possible with support from
DTE Energy Foundation

For More Information
Rubén O. Martinez, Director, Julian Samora Research Insititue, (517) 432-1317 or
rmartinez@jsri.msu.edu