The proposed U.S. Latina/o Studies Program (USLT) at the University of Maryland (UM) is the result of student, faculty, and staff working together over the past decade to further enhance the university’s mission and commitment to diversity. The USLT seeks to bring an intellectually rigorous program to the campus, centering on the ways U.S. Latinas/os have contributed to the State of Maryland and to the United States. The Program fills a regional academic niche in the Mid-Atlantic and competes with peer institutions in this area.

The Proposed Program

The U.S. Latina/o Studies Program at the University of Maryland, College Park centers its intellectual and public service activities on Latina/o issues within the historical, contemporary, and regional Latino settlement communities in the United States. Drawing from premier resources at UM, as well as those in the greater metropolitan area, the academic program is interdisciplinary in scope and research and community oriented. U.S. Latina/o Studies expands long-held disciplinary boundaries that have excluded diverse experiences and societies within the geo-political borders of the United States.

Mission

To provide U.S. Latino-centered pedagogy, research and public service, to assure the visibility of U.S. Latina/o experiences on campus in the region and the state, to engage and outreach to the surrounding Latina/o communities, and to increase access to resources at all levels of the university, county and state.

Vision

To provide the State of Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region with the first undergraduate major and minor degrees and the first graduate certificate to eligible master’s level and doctoral level candidates in U.S. Latina/o Studies.

U.S. Latina/o faculty, Undergraduates and Graduates at the University of Maryland

According to a 2007 survey reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education, the University of Maryland, College Park ranks behind its peer institutions in faculty of color hires. Despite increases in minority faculty, U.S. African American and Latino faculty representation lags at the University of Maryland.

Developmental Milestones

Fall 1996

- In 1996, in response to the Asian, Hispanic and Native American Task Force Report, UM leadership observed that, “While there are extensive Hispanic course offerings, they relate primarily to Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American cultures. There are no permanent course offerings that relate to Asian, Hispanic, and Native American topics.”

Fall 2005

- Former Provost Destler calls for the formation of a Task Force to provide programmatic direction for the development of a program on U.S. Latina/o Studies under Dean Edna Szamanski.

Spring 2006

- Task Force releases its findings and recommendations in, Report of the Latino/a Studies Task Force 2005-2006, urging UM “to take the necessary steps to create a Latino/a Studies Program.”

Spring 2007

- Former Provost Destler provides funds for the Program’s inaugural year.
- Dr. Ruth E. Zambrana, Professor of Women’s Studies, is appointed the Program’s Interim Director.
- The Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity (CRGE) agrees to administer the new Program.
- Drs. Rodriguez and Nieves are appointed Program Faculty for academic year 2007-2008.
Key Facts About U.S. Latinas/os: Nationally and in the State of Maryland

- Latinos are the largest racial/ethnicity minority group in the US and represent 14.5% of the U.S. population. This trend is projected to continue as the Hispanic population continues to grow.

- By the year 2050, the U.S. census projects that the Latino population will grow 188 percent to 102.6 million, nearly one-quarter of the U.S. population.

- In the State of Maryland, Latinos are the fastest growing racial/ethnic minority group.

- Latinos in Maryland, who in 2005 represented 5.8% of the state’s population, have mainly settled in Montgomery County (13.7%) and Prince George’s County (11.7%) in close proximity to the College Park campus (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005).

- No scholarly academic program exists in the Mid-Atlantic region on U.S. Latinas/os.

Recent Accomplishments

The proposed U.S. Latina/o studies program at University of Maryland has already received national attention (*Hispanic Outlook Magazine in Higher Education Magazine*), emerging on par with many of our peer institutions with similar U.S.-based programs like those at the University of California at Los Angeles; the University of California-Irvine; the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor; the University of Texas at Austin; the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; New York University and such prestigious universities like Cornell University and Brown University.

Fall 2007

- The launching of three undergraduate courses in the U.S. Latina/o Studies Program (USLT).

- USLT 201 is developed and co-taught by Drs. Nieves and Rodriguez. USLT 202 & USLT 488 are scheduled for Spring, 2008.

- Program receives a 2007 UTAP Faculty Participation Grant from the College of Arts & Humanities.

- USLT has co-sponsored major U.S. Latina/o Studies events on campus since the spring of 2007 which include:
  - The first U.S. Latina/o art exhibition in the University’s history, *Visualizing El Barrio*, was held at the Stamp Union Gallery (August/September 2007).
  - Co-hosted lecture entitled “Woman’s Work is Never Done: Chicana Visual Arts and Activism” by artist Yolanda M. Lopez with the Department of English and Honor’s Program (October, 2007).

Among UM tenure/tenure track faculty in 2006, 3% are Latina/o and 5% are African American. (Faculty by Race and Ethnicity, 2006, UM IRPA website).

Enrollment among Latina/o undergraduate students has modestly increased over the last decade. In the fall of 1996, 1105 Latina/o students were enrolled and in 2006 only 1445 Latina/o students are enrolled out of a total population of 25,154 undergraduates.

Among Latino/graduate students there has been a slightly larger increase from 196 students in 1996 to 334 students in 2006.

In 2004, Ph.D. completion rates paint a more striking picture with 5% of African Americans, 5% of Asian Americans, 1% of Latina/os and 0.2% of American Indians awarded Ph.D.s.

These statistics show the need to increase the number of Latino students in the pipeline who are most likely to pursue interdisciplinary and intersectional scholarship in critical racial and ethnic inquiry and fill future faculty positions.

For more information, contact Dr. Ruth Enid Zambrana, Interim Director, U.S. Latina/o Studies Program, at 301-405-3447 or at rzambran@umd.edu