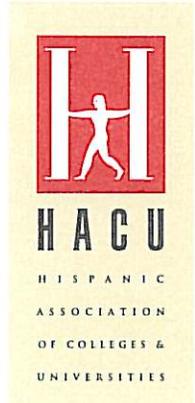


October 27, 2008

National Headquarters
8415 Datapoint Drive, Suite 400
San Antonio, Texas 78229
210-692-3805 (voice) 210-692-0823 (fax)
Website: www.hacu.net



The Honorable Edward Schafer
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Schafer:

On behalf of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), I want to thank the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) for holding a stakeholder listening session about the new provisions for Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) included in the recently reauthorized Farm Bill at the HACU Annual Conference in Denver, CO, on October 11, 2008.

During the stakeholder meeting, 20 individuals, from 17 institutions and two organizations, provided public comments on the definition of "Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs)" along with other recommendations on the five new programs created for this new cadre of institutions.

On behalf of the nation's more than 260 HSIs and the HACU Governing Board, which includes fourteen HSI presidents/CEOs, I wish to submit HACU's official recommendations for institutions to be identified as Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) and for the new programs that will target this cadre of institutions.

These recommendations are the result not only of HACU's participation in the stakeholder listening session, but also of meetings with and input from the USDA-HACU Leadership Group, the HACU Government Relations Committee, and the HACU Governing Board. While we have been in communication with the various HACU advisory groups, the recommendations enclosed herewith are entirely HACU's own.

Mr. Secretary, we thank you and the USDA for reaching out to HACU and HSIs for comments on the formulation of federal regulations that will provide guidance and oversight in the operations of HSACUs. We know our recommendations will be given serious consideration.

HACU and the HSI community look forward to working with you and your staff to develop and implement model programs that will prepare Hispanics for career and leadership positions in agriculture-related fields.

Sincerely,

Antonio R. Flores
President & CEO

cc: HACU Governing Board

Enclosure: HACU's Recommendations for Rules and Regulations Implementing HSACU Provisions in the Reauthorized Farm Bill

THE HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (HACU)
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RULES AND REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING HSACU
PROVISIONS IN THE REAUTHORIZED FARM BILL
OCTOBER 27, 2008

Definition of Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs)

This is a new group of educational institutions established in the Farm Bill reauthorization. The legislation states that HSACUs will be defined as: 1) colleges or universities that qualify as Hispanic-Serving Institutions and 2) that offer associate, bachelors, or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields.

This definition clearly states that HSACUs should be institutions of higher education that offer degrees in agriculture-related fields. While we believe that there should be some flexibility in the determination of what constitutes an “agriculture-related field,” we also believe that the criteria should adhere to the spirit of the law and be restricted to those fields that will address the mission of USDA and the United States agricultural community.

If every HSI is deemed eligible to become an HSACU, the potential impact of limited federal resources through these grant opportunities will be diminished. Moreover, the legislation rightly seeks to ensure a true connection between these funding opportunities and the goal of increasing the number of Hispanics in agriculture-related careers.

However, we would also caution against limiting in advance the number of institutions that could be eligible for designation as HSACUs. We must guard against the creation of “haves and have-nots” for these funding opportunities within the HSI community. HSIs will continue to develop and become effective and productive partners with USDA and the U.S. agriculture community if provided adequate funding and guidance. Consequently, the criteria should not preclude current and emerging HSIs from having the opportunity to become HSACUs in the future.

Therefore, we propose that the USDA rules and regulations development panel draft specific criteria that coincide with USDA’s current and future strategic goals that HSIs would need to meet in order to be HSACUs and eligible for HSACU funding opportunities. Such a process will also provide a clear roadmap for HSIs to follow to become HSACUs.

The competitive grants section of the Farm Bill identifies the following academic fields as critical to the USDA: agriculture, human nutrition, food science, bio-energy, and environmental science. However, this list should not exclude degrees and areas that will ultimately prove to be beneficial to USDA and agriculture-related fields. According to the IPEDS (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System) listing of agriculture and related fields degrees and programs compiled by the U.S. Department of Education, over 80 degree areas could serve to define “agriculture-related fields” and be used as a basis for identifying HSACUs. This list of majors based on the IPEDS categories is enclosed.

This list may not include every relevant degree program, especially as agricultural technology continues to develop, but it does provide a starting point. Other degrees important to the U.S. agricultural community and the USDA should also be considered: earth science, geology, natural sciences, bio-technology, dietetics, etc.

Attached is an IPEDS based list of HSIs that provide either associate or baccalaureate degrees in these fields as examples of institutions that could be considered HSACUs and active partners with USDA in meeting the agriculture, energy and nutritional needs of the nation.

It is also important to include special emphasis on transfer and articulation programs between 2- and 4-year institutions in the grant awarding process since the overall goal of HSACU designation is to increase the number of Hispanics that attain degrees in agriculture-related fields and are engaged in the U.S. agriculture industry.

Finally, the selection process for HSACU designation should follow a methodology that will ensure equitable representation between 2- and 4-year HSI institutions and among all regions of the country with significant Hispanic populations and that encourages HSIs to pursue HSACU designation, both today and in the future.

HACU's comments on the five new HSACU programs in the Farm Bill legislation

The HSACU Endowment Fund -- This program, on October 1 of each fiscal year, will distribute 60 percent of the interest accrued in the fund among HSACUs prorated on the basis of their Hispanic enrollment. The other 40 percent will be equally distributed among HSACUs. This fund will be partially enrollment-driven to ensure that, regardless of the institution's total enrollment of Hispanic students, the institution will be able to provide an education experience in agriculture and related fields. HACU strongly supports this new program and encourages the Secretary of Agriculture to seek funding for this endowment in the next budget cycle so that the interest will begin to accrue for HSACU distribution in future budget cycles.

The HSACU Equity Grants Program -- This new formula-based grant program (\$80,000 by number of HSACUs) promises to be valuable for HSACUs that need resources to build capacity for faculty training and infrastructure in order to compete for grants open to 1862, 1890 and 1994 land grant institutions. HACU strongly supports this new program and encourages the development of regulations that allow for maximum utilization of these funds with the opportunity to reapply without a wait-out period upon completion of a given grant.

The HSACU Institutional Capacity-Building Grants Program -- This new competitive grant program for institutional capacity-building (not including alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings) should be flexible enough to allow HSACUs to best determine how these funds could increase their capacity. Nonetheless, any grant funded under this program should have a direct relationship to the long-term needs of the USDA. Lastly, we recommend that the USDA assure broad and equitable distribution of these funds, given the significant number of HSACUs anticipated, and that grants should be limited to three fiscal years.

The HSACU Fundamental and Applied Research Grants Program -- This new competitive grant program will fund fundamental and applied research in agriculture, human nutrition, food science, bio-energy and environmental science. To allow for maximum equity in the awarding of grants, given the large number of HSACUs expected, grants should be restricted to three years unless a specialized research project requires an additional two years to allow for sufficient time to collect, analyze and record research findings. In addition, regulations should provide some flexibility so that not only research-intensive institutions, but also less research-oriented institutions will have the opportunity to compete for these grants. This flexibility will allow non-

research-intensive institutions to develop capacity and better serve the needs of the USDA. This is especially true for two-year community colleges. Emphasis on transfer and articulation between 2- and 4-year institutions, as well as collaborations to allow for joint research opportunities, would be especially important for this program.

The HSACU Extension Grants Program

1. HSACUs will now have access to two major Extension Grants Programs (406 and AFRI), which combined provide over \$200 million a year in grants, but are authorized to receive up to \$700 million in potential appropriations. HACU recommends that this program ensure that HSACUs have equitable access based on their fiscal capacity and that grants be equitably distributed between 2- and 4-year institutions, as well as traditional research and less research-intensive institutions.
2. A special HSACU competitive grant program will assist institutions in developing capacity to compete in 406 and AFRI programs. Specifically, HSACUs without the research and outreach capacity of 1862 and 1994 institutions will have access to funding for cooperative extension work through a special competitive grant program. HACU recommends that regulations should provide flexibility to ensure an equitable distribution of grants between 2- and 4-year institutions and research-intensive and non-research-intensive institutions. Flexibility allows non-research-intensive institutions to develop capacity to better meet the mission and goals of the USDA.

Cost Sharing – Mandatory cost sharing is sometimes considered in awarding competitive grants. However, HACU strongly opposes a mandatory cost sharing requirement for any of the competitive HSACU grant programs. Such a measure would negatively impact the poorer institutions, including many community colleges, which are the ones that most need infrastructure development grants. Mandatory cost sharing favors wealthy institutions and decreases access (“discretionary” support), and HSACUs and HSIs would be disproportionately impacted as they have lower endowments, fewer state and federal resources, fewer partnerships with private industry and often very tight operating budgets.

Of specific concern is the *HSACU Institutional Capacity Building Grant Program*. Under Section 1456, Subsection (d)(2)(C) “Payment of Non-Federal Share,” the statute gives the Secretary of Agriculture the discretion to determine what amount is to be specified, or even waived, based on institutional needs. HACU recommends that HSACUs be exempt from the non-federal share requirement and would urge the Secretary of Agriculture to waive this requirement based on the negative impact this requirement would have on HSACU participation rates.

HACU strongly recommends that USDA eliminate obstacles for Hispanics to pursue careers in agriculture-related fields. Mandatory cost sharing would also diminish any incentives for HSIs to become HSACUs and pursue USDA funding opportunities, which in turn would impact the number of Hispanics in agriculture-related fields.

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

ACADEMIC MAJORS IN AGRICULTURE AREAS



Agriculture, General	Animal Nutrition
Agricultural Business and Management, General	Dairy Science
Agribusiness/Agricultural Business Operations	Livestock Management
Agricultural Economics	Poultry Science
Farm/Farm and Ranch Management	Animal Sciences, Other
Agricultural/Farm Supplies Retailing and Wholesaling	Food Science
Agricultural Business Technology	Food Technology and Processing
Agricultural Business and Management, Other	Food Science and Technology, Other
Agricultural Mechanization, General	Plant Sciences, General
Agricultural Power Machinery Operation	Agronomy and Crop Science
Agricultural Mechanics and Equipment/Machine Technology	Horticultural Science
Agricultural Mechanization, Other	Agricultural and Horticultural Plant Breeding
Agricultural Production Operations, General	Plant Protection and Integrated Pest Management
Animal/Livestock Husbandry and Production	Range Science and Management
Aquaculture	Plant Sciences, Other
Crop Production	Soil Science and Agronomy, General
Dairy Husbandry and Production	Soil Sciences, Other
Horse Husbandry/Equine Science and Management	Agriculture, Agriculture Operations, & Related Sciences, Other
Agricultural Production Operations, Other	Natural Resources/Conservation, General
Agricultural and Food Products Processing	Environmental Studies
Dog/Pet/Animal Grooming	Environmental Science
Animal Training	Natural Resources Conservation & Research, Other
Equestrian/Equine Studies	Natural Resources Management and Policy
Taxidermy/Taxidermist	Natural Resource Economics
Agricultural and Domestic Animal Services, Other	Water, Wetlands, & Marine Resources Management
Applied Horticulture/Horticulture Operations, General	Land Use Planning & Management/Development
Ornamental Horticulture	Natural Resources Management & Policy, Other
Greenhouse Operations and Management	Fishing and Fisheries Sciences & Management
Landscaping and Groundskeeping	Forestry, General
Plant Nursery Operations and Management	Forest Sciences and Biology
Turf and Turfgrass Management	Forest Management/Forest Resources Management
Floriculture/Floristry Operations and Management	Urban Forestry
Applied Horticulture/Horticultural Business Services, Other	Wood Science and Wood Products/Pulp & Paper Technology
International Agriculture	Forest Resources Production and Management
Agricultural and Extension Education Services	Forest Technology/Technician
Agricultural Communication/Journalism	Forestry, Other
Agricultural Public Services, Other	Wildlife and Wildlands Science & Management
Animal Sciences, General	Natural Resources and Conservation, Other
Agricultural Animal Breeding	

Source: IPEDS 2006, U.S. Department of Education

Compiled by HACU

HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

HSIS AWARDING ASSOCIATE, BACHELORS, MASTERS AND
DOCTORATE DEGREES IN AGRICULTURE

Institution	City	State	Highest Agriculture Degree Offered
Arizona Western College	Yuma	AZ	Associate's
Central Arizona College	Coolidge	AZ	Associate's
Cochise College	Douglas	AZ	Associate's
Southwestern College	Phoenix	AZ	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Allan Hancock College	Santa Maria	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Antelope Valley College	Lancaster	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Bakersfield College	Bakersfield	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
California State University-Bakersfield	Bakersfield	CA	Bachelor's
California State University-Stanislaus	Turlock	CA	Bachelor's
California State University-San Bernardino	San Bernardino	CA	Bachelor's
California State Polytechnic University-Pomona	Pomona	CA	Master's
California State University-Fresno	Fresno	CA	Master's
California State University-Fullerton	Fullerton	CA	Master's
California State University-Long Beach	Long Beach	CA	Bachelor's
Cerritos College	Norwalk	CA	Associate's
Citrus College	Glendora	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
College of the Desert	Palm Desert	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Fresno City College	Fresno	CA	Award of less than 1 academic year
Fresno Pacific University	Fresno	CA	Bachelor's
Fullerton College	Fullerton	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Hartnell College	Salinas	CA	Associate's
Imperial Valley College	Imperial	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Reedley College	Reedley	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Long Beach City College	Long Beach	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Los Angeles Pierce College	Woodland Hills	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Merced College	Merced	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Modesto Junior College	Modesto	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Mt San Antonio College	Walnut	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Porterville College	Porterville	CA	Associate's
San Joaquin Delta College	Stockton	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
College of the Sequoias	Visalia	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Southwestern College	Chula Vista	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Ventura College	Ventura	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Whittier College	Whittier	CA	Bachelor's
Yuba College	Marysville	CA	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
Otero Junior College	La Junta	CO	Award of less than 1 academic year
Trinidad State Junior College	Trinidad	CO	Associate's
Barry University	Miami	FL	Bachelor's
Florida International University	Miami	FL	Master's
Miami Dade College	Miami	FL	Associate's
Nova Southeastern University	Fort Lauderdale	FL	Master's
Northeastern Illinois University	Chicago	IL	Bachelor's
Seward County Community College	Liberal	KS	Associate's
Southwestern College	Winfield	KS	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years
University of St Thomas	Saint Paul	MN	Bachelor's

Source: IPEDS 2006, U.S. Department of Education

Compiled by HACU

Eastern New Mexico University-Main Campus	Portales	NM		Bachelor's
Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell Campus	Roswell	NM	Award of at least 1 but less than 2 academic years	
New Mexico Highlands University	Las Vegas	NM		Bachelor's
New Mexico Junior College	Hobbs	NM		Associate's
University of New Mexico-Main Campus	Albuquerque	NM		Bachelor's
New Mexico State University-Main Campus	Las Cruces	NM		Doctor's
Northern New Mexico College	Espanola	NM		Associate's
Southwestern College	Santa Fe	NM	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
Mesalands Community College	Tucumcari	NM		Associate's
Western New Mexico University	Silver City	NM		Bachelor's
CUNY Bronx Community College	Bronx	NY	Award of at least 1 but less than 2 academic years	
Mercy College-Main Campus	Dobbs Ferry	NY		Bachelor's
Southwestern College	Franklin	OH	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
Southwestern College	Cincinnati	OH	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
Southwestern College	Dayton	OH	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
Coastal Bend College	Beeville	TX		Associate's
Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi	Corpus Christi	TX		Master's
Houston Community College System	Houston	TX		Associate's
Howard College	Big Spring	TX		Associate's
Texas A & M International University	Laredo	TX		Bachelor's
Odessa College	Odessa	TX		Associate's
Saint Edward's University	Austin	TX		Bachelor's
University of St Thomas	Houston	TX		Bachelor's
South Plains College	Levelland	TX		Associate's
Southwest Texas Junior College	Uvalde	TX		Associate's
Sul Ross State University	Alpine	TX		Master's
Texas A & M University-Kingsville	Kingsville	TX		Doctor's
The University of Texas at El Paso	El Paso	TX		Master's
The University of Texas of the Permian Basin	Odessa	TX		Bachelor's
The University of Texas at San Antonio	San Antonio	TX		Master's
Texas State Technical College-Harlingen	Harlingen	TX		Associate's
Heritage University	Toppenish	WA		Bachelor's
Yakima Valley Community College	Yakima	WA		Associate's
Bayamon Central University	Bayamon	PR		Bachelor's
Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico-Ponce	Ponce	PR		Bachelor's
Universidad Metropolitana	Cupey	PR		Master's
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-San German	San German	PR		Master's
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Barranquitas	Barranquitas	PR	Award of less than 1 academic year	
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Metro	San Juan	PR		Master's
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Ponce	Mercedita	PR		Bachelor's
University of Puerto Rico-Arecibo	Arecibo	PR		Associate's
University of Puerto Rico-Humacao	Humacao	PR		Bachelor's
University of Puerto Rico-Utuado	Utuado	PR		Associate's
University of Puerto Rico-Mayaguez	Mayaguez	PR		Master's
University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras Campus	Rio Piedras	PR		Bachelor's
Universidad Del Turabo	Gurabo	PR		Master's
Southwestern College	Florence	KY	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
Palo Alto College	San Antonio	TX	Award of at least 2 but less than 4 academic years	
California State University-Monterey Bay	Seaside	CA		Bachelor's



2039 Kennedy Boulevard
Jersey City, New Jersey 07305-1597

Office of the President
201-200-3111

October 22, 2008

Irma A. Lawrence, Ed.D.
National Program Leader
United States Department of Agriculture
SERD/CSREES
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Mail Stop 2251
Washington, D.C. 20250-2251

RE: Establishment of the Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities

Dear Dr. Lawrence:

As the only public four-year Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in the state of New Jersey, New Jersey City University (NJCU) is uniquely poised to answer the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) call for expanded training in the food and agriculture sciences among underrepresented populations. NJCU's ranking among the nation's top five most diverse institutions of higher education bespeaks the extraordinary pool of talent which comprises its student body, 34% of whom are of Hispanic origin. Historically, minority students have been overlooked in higher education, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. NJCU has vigorously dedicated itself to overcoming the systemic crisis in recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of Hispanic and minority populations that marks higher education in this nation, and has endeavored to attract and prepare more candidates from these underrepresented groups for STEM careers. A major focus of this initiative, as outlined in the University's Strategic Vision 2010, has been the expansion of educational programs and instruction related to the field of Agricultural sciences. NJCU recognizes that preparing its students for an increasingly complex and interconnected world implies empowering them to meet the challenges posed by the unprecedented growth of a global economy and by a changing ecosystem. In this light, the agricultural sciences, encompassing such issues as maintaining adequate food sources in the face of increased demand; protecting natural resources in both urban and rural environments; and nurturing stewardship and ecology, have been a sphere of intense commitment and are central to the fulfillment of the University's educational vision.

NJCU's status as an educational investor in agricultural sciences derives from a multidisciplinary approach which prepares students to meet the challenges of a changing agricultural system. This route to fashioning a new curriculum weaves together programs from Biology, Chemistry, and the Geosciences and fosters a collaborative alliance between the faculty of various departments, widening students' access to facilities, and the University's pool of knowledge and teaching talent. NJCU's Biology department guides students in the foundations of Agricultural Sciences through required and elective courses in Plant Science, Animal Biology, Genetics, and Ecology. In addition to modern laboratory facilities and equipment, the Biology department boasts a state-of-the-art greenhouse and botanical laboratory which provides students with hands-on training. This problem-based, experiential approach to scientific study has been universally recognized as vital to successful learning and redounds to students' future success as practicing scientists. In keeping with the University's mission as a progressive institution, Biology Department faculty members also regularly participate in pedagogical training workshops designed to improve teaching techniques and target instruction to the needs of minority students and the challenges they face.

The Geoscience department at NJCU has similarly made great strides in attracting students to the STEM disciplines and in preparing them for the modern food /agriculture science workplace. Initiatives undertaken by the Geoscience department, such as the modernization of facilities and an investment in technology and equipment (including a state-of-the-art GIS/GPS lab), are in ideal alignment with the USDA's goals. The faculty members of the Geoscience department, together with consultants and representatives of the University's College of Education, have also participated in a thorough self-assessment of pedagogical techniques with the aim of realigning them to better meet the needs of Hispanic and minority populations. These efforts have vastly improved the quality and delivery of instruction, providing a higher level of experiential learning in the field, laboratory, and classroom. Geoscience students have gained valuable hands-on experience with a variety of issues related to agriculture, such as studying and preventing the contamination of the food supply and enhancing food safety. In light of this work, it is evident that the Geoscience department at NJCU deserves designation as an excellent provider of agricultural science education. Recognition on the part of the USDA of the Geoscience department's status as a growing leader in agricultural studies will ensure the continued success of the University's endeavors in this vital field.

NJCU continues to expand and prepare students to meet both the current and anticipated challenges germane to food and agricultural science. Current initiatives at the University include the cultivation of a close partnership with Liberty State Park, a state-owned recreational area comprised of over 1,000 acres in Jersey City, and with Liberty Science Center, an institution of tremendous educational substance as such pertains to nature, technology, and the humanity. The work done with these two entities in concerns related to natural resources management and stewardship will make available an abundance of resources, from state-of-the art technical equipment and facilities to professional consultants, as well as opportunities in the form of internships, independent study programs, and, ultimately, employment. NJCU is also aggressively expanding its outreach to area high schools in an effort to attract more students from underrepresented

minority populations to the STEM disciplines, with an emphasis on agriculture. NJCU is committed to providing dynamic instruction in the food and agricultural sciences via evidence-based pedagogy and community partnerships, and is strident in advancing the engagement of underrepresented populations as participants in these programs.

Given our mandate, I strongly urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service to include Biology and Geoscience among the agriculture-related fields which will define educational institutions as Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (HSACU). Without such inclusion, the overwhelming majority of Hispanic students attending New Jersey City University and other HSIs will never benefit from the doors and opportunities that are opened via HSACU designation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Hernández', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carlos Hernández, Ph.D.
President

cc: Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Ruddys Andrade, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs/ Grants and Sponsored Programs



Cooperative Extension Service

College of Agriculture and Home Economics
Office of the Associate Dean and Director, MSC 3AE
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30003
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8003
Tel: 575-646-3015
Fax: 575-646-7042 or 575-646-5975

To: Dr. John Miklozek
Multicultural Alliances, Science and Education Resources Development Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
HSACU@csrees.usda.gov
Subject: CSREES – 2008-0004

From: Jon C. Boren 
Interim Associate Dean and Director
New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service
College of Agriculture and Home Economics
PO Box 30003 MSC 3AE
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Date: October 27, 2008

Subject: Comments on Programs for Hispanic Serving Agricultural Institutions

New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service would like to present the following comments to CSREES as they develop regulations for identifying and certifying institutions as Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs), having been established as new cooperating educational institutions in section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA).

Section 7101, (10) (A) & (B): (Page 883):

New Mexico State University (NMSU) is an established 1862 Land Grant University as well as a Hispanic Serving Institute with a Hispanic student population of over 42%. New Mexico State University, by definition in Section 7101, also is eligible as a Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College and University; which offers bachelorette and higher degree programs in agriculture, food science, environmental science and other related subjects. In addition, New Mexico State University has demonstrated an exemplary effort in extension programming and outreach in serving Hispanic farmers and ranchers in New Mexico as was acknowledged by receiving the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP), the USDA Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service (CSREES) and National Extension Diversity Taskforce 2008 National Award for Diversity. New Mexico State University may be the only 1862 Land Grant University which is both a Hispanic Serving Institute as well as a Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College as defined by Section 7101 of the FCEA 2008. Clarification of this definition must be made to include NMSU and other HSI's and HSACU's who may share this dual mission.

Section 7101 HSACU Eligibility:

Eligibility for participation in funding requests as a Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College and University should include at least one of the following qualifications:

- (a) Qualify as a Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College and University
- (b) Offer associate, bachelors, or higher degrees in agriculture and other related fields.
- (c) Must have a demonstrated history of providing extension and/or outreach efforts in assisting Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers in production, marketing, financial or other related Extension efforts.

College of Sciences
Office of the Dean

October 13, 2008

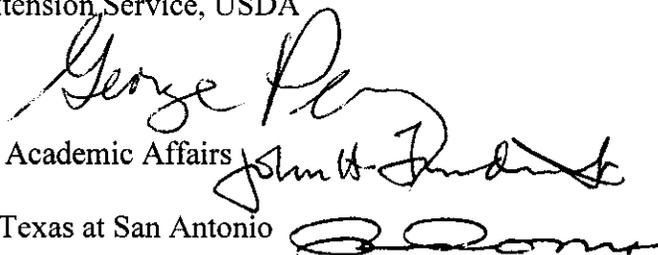
MEMORANDUM

To: HSACU@csrees.usda.gov
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA

From: George Perry, Dean of the College of Sciences

John Frederick, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ricardo Romo, President of The University of Texas at San Antonio



Re: CSREES-2008-0004 Solicitation of input from stakeholders regarding programs for the Hispanic-serving agriculture colleges and universities

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) should be considered as a member of the new group of Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities established in section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. UTSA qualifies as a Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965) and we offer bachelors and graduate degrees in agriculture-related fields. We are not a 1862 institution. We have bachelor, master, and doctoral degree programs in environmental science. We also offer a bachelor degree and masters degree in Biology with a concentration in ecology. Courses offered in these degree programs include, but are not limited to Environmental Systems, Environmental Ecology, Environmental Microbiology, Environmental Chemistry and Toxicology, Environmental Remediation, Animal Behavior, Conservation Biology, Desert Biology, Wildlife Biology, Ornithology, Entomology, Plant Ecology, and Field Biology. Several of our former students are currently working for the USDA. Several USDA grants have been awarded to faculty at UTSA and we currently are a participant in a joint venture between Texas A & M University and the United States Forest Service. Finally, the University of Texas at San Antonio Strategic Plan, *UTSA 2016* has three foundational themes: 1) building programs that meet the needs of a global society, 2) promoting diversity, and 3) fostering transformative leadership. The University of Texas at San Antonio's commitment to the environment is indicated by the five areas of collaborative excellence – health, security, energy and environment, human and social development, and sustainability delineated in our strategic plan.



www.maricopa.edu

Rufus Glasper
Chancellor

October 23, 2008

John Miklozek
Multicultural Alliances, Science and Education
Resources Development Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mail Stop 2251
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20250-2251

RE: CSREES-2008-0004

Dear Mr. Miklozek,

The Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD) is privileged to participate in the work of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in providing innovative educational opportunities in agricultural-related Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields for a diverse population of students. Grants awarded to South Mountain Community College (SMCC) through the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Higher Education Grant Program of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) have enhanced SMCC's capacity to make higher education programs accessible to many under-represented minority students. We currently have 3 eligible Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI's) and are proud of our work in the most ethnically and economically diverse communities in the Phoenix area.

It is our understanding that changes to USDA funding programs have been mandated by Congress to focus the work and efforts of HSI's and that the USDA is seeking input on the identification and certification of institutions that will be eligible for future funding. It is our hope that USDA will establish funding support for a diverse application of higher education programs that provide Hispanic students with higher levels of inclusion in the technical workforce, an increased number of pathways for securing education credentials, and quality and innovation in integrated and cross-disciplinary programs for emerging fields of study.

IDENTIFICATION AND CERTIFICATION OF HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS

The identification of HSI's is currently based on institutional enrollment—a college or university having a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic students. We feel that educational institutions serving large populations of Hispanic students are best served by that definition, i.e. as a 2 or 4 year institution of higher education with a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment comprised of no less than 25% Hispanic students.

A Community of Colleges...Colleges for the Community

Chandler-Gilbert | Estrella Mountain | GateWay | Glendale | Mesa
Paradise Valley | Phoenix College | Rio Salado | Scottsdale | South Mountain | Skill Centers

2411 West 14th Street
Tempe, AZ
85281 - 6942

Telephone

480.731.8100

Fax

480.731.8120

Email

r.glasper@domail.
maricopa.edu

Certification for eligibility for funding as an HSI has been a matter of self-reporting. Those institutions intending to apply in a given competition complete an enrollment certification based on Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data reports from the enrollment period immediately preceding the application. Enrollment data may be verified by USDA via IPEDS reports. Institutions that *become* eligible as HSI's for the application year would report IPEDS data with attached documentation to support their status. We support this certification process because it is familiar, verifiable, and would not add to an institution's administrative burden to complete for USDA programs.

DEVELOPING FUNDING PRIORITIES

We expect that institutions designated *Hispanic Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities* (HSACU's) will offer certificates or degrees in areas of study supported by the USDA and advance our country's needs and priorities for education, workforce training, and research in food and agriculture. We feel it is important to recognize that emerging fields of study are often cross-disciplinary and that institutions can offer credentials in such fields through concentrations and certificates.

We believe future funding for HSACU's would benefit from having funding programs that give weight to supporting institutional development and student learning that improve student opportunities and success and offer the following recommendations:

1. Focus funding priorities on pre-school through graduate school (P-20) systemic initiatives to improve student achievement, retention and graduation, program completion and preparation for post-secondary education and employment. Support and promote activities that include developing career pathways, institutional development and assessment which links P-20 institutions; curriculum revision and alignment; student support services; and teacher training and faculty development in the context of creating a seamless infrastructure among HSI's/ HSACU's and early childhood, elementary, and secondary education.

- Set priorities for educational programs that include pipeline and pathway programs.
- Promote and support dual enrollment programs for agriculture-related education and training programs.

2. Enhance opportunities for community colleges to increase the number of Hispanic students entering agricultural professions.

- Promote the development of new community college programs. National figures show that most underrepresented and underserved minority students choose to attend community colleges as a first-step to higher education. We know that flexible scheduling, convenient community-based locations, a focus on teaching and learning, and a commitment to supporting student achievement are keys to student success. These institutions are in a unique position to have a rapid and dramatic impact on increasing the number of students entering agriculture-related careers and fields of study/research through Associate Degree programs, transfer partnership agreements with 4 year institutions, workforce diversity initiatives, and occupational certificates.
 - Support community college districts that have multiple HSI's and partnerships between HSI's in geographic proximity to one another, to facilitate curriculum and student support program development among the participating institutions, thereby leveraging federal support for greater overall impact for Hispanic students attending these institutions.
 - Give 2 year colleges options to develop and offer certificates in areas related to USDA needs and priorities, e.g. Veterinary technicians, Engineering technicians, hydrology, biotechnology, and food handling and safety.
 - Provide for financial support for economically disadvantaged students.
 - Develop specific priorities related to workforce development and diversity, targeting high-growth occupational fields, especially those where minority populations are underrepresented.
 - Provide specific workforce priorities for diversity in federal or civil service employment where there is a high need for future workers and/or a high level of under representation among minority populations.
 - Support agricultural research fellowships for instructors at community college HSI's.
3. Promote programs that target instruction and innovation in teaching and learning.
- Support cross-disciplinary program development at both 2 year and 4 year institutions offering degrees with majors, concentrations, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) areas that relate to USDA priorities, including but not limited to: chemistry, biology, engineering, physics, biotechnology, environmental science, engineering, physics, economics, statistics, mathematics, computer science, and geology.

- Fund small laboratory/technology improvements and the acquisition of industry-standard equipment for educational programs.
- Support and sustain the integration of laboratory and research capacities into program curricula.
- Support programs that use innovative and distance learning strategies to reach students who would typically not have access to educational programs in the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) content areas.
- Support internships and experiential learning opportunities for community college students.
- Promote having student support service components as integral parts of any comprehensive instructional program submitted for funding consideration.

We commend the work CSREES has accomplished in past years and are optimistic that changes to the agency and funding programs will advance the good work that began in CSREES.



Rufus Glasper
Chancellor
Maricopa Community Colleges



Maria Harper-Marinick
Vice Chancellor Academic and Student Affairs
Maricopa Community Colleges



Ken Atwater
President
South Mountain Community College
HSI



Ernie Lara
President
Estrella Mountain Community College
HSI



Anna Solley
President
Phoenix College
HSI

Hispanic Serving Agriculture Colleges and Universities Comments

Submitted to HSACU@csrees.usda.gov

Name:

Institution:

i oppose this spending for a discriminatory group. we should be operating as one nation with no regard to setting up special little segments for one minority or another. the american taxpayers will go crazy funding all of these little segments. we are one nation. operate as one nation please. i very much oppose this spending. it is stupid and divisive.

Name: Marylou Shockley

Institution: California State University, Monterey Bay

My name is Marylou Shockley. I am the Chair of the School of Business here at the California State University-Monterey Bay (CSUMB). We are a HSI with 27% of students of Latino/a American backgrounds. In addition, of first generation students obtaining baccalaureate degrees is 43%. As part of our mission statement, we not only support our various populations, but also our business communities. For the Monterey Bay area made up of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties. The largest industry is agriculture composed of wine grape, fruit/berries, and leafy green production. It's a \$3.5 Billion industry.

The Farm Bill has established funds to support both research and education for our type of specialty crops agriculture. We feel it is fundamental to our economy that these funds be preserved in the Farm Bill for the purpose intended. We also understand that for HSIs, the Farm Bill has allocated in Provision III, Title VII: there are funds set aside for HSACUs ...about \$80,000/ per entity. We want to assure that these funds actually find their way to those of us who in the front lines of agriculture education and research.

Name: R. Vic Morgan

Institution: Sul Ross State University

Sul Ross State University is a four-year comprehensive Hispanic Serving Institution with a School of Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences. Our agricultural program offers associate of applied science, baccalaureate, and master's degrees in agriculture and related disciplines and services approximately 15% of our institution's student population. Our position to identify and certify Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU) newly recognized in H.R. 6124-PL 110-246 is as follows:

1. 1. The USDA should consider an Hispanic-serving Agriculture program as a one that possess an organized degree in agriculture and related disciplines (e.g. Natural Resources and Forestry) as determined by the US Department of Education Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes that USDA-CSREES recognizes as agricultural programs. These institutions should possess at least one program that leads to a recognized degree (e.g. AAS, BS) in one of these recognized CIP codes

- 2> 2. Because the intent of these initiatives is to further the education of Hispanic and other underserved student populations, and because an associate-level (e.g. two-year) degree is less conducive to management-level positions, we further propose that to qualify as an HSACU the two-year institutional programs be linked to four-year HSACU programs with cooperative agreements that allow students completing a two-year degree to articulate into a baccalaureate program.

Thank you for considering our input. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Name: Joanna K. Michelich

Institution: Cochise College

Through this email, Cochise College is requesting that it be designated as an Hispanic-serving Agricultural College and University. Currently, Cochise College is an Hispanic –serving Community College located in rural southeastern Arizona with a long commitment to education in agriculture. Our college population is currently 36.6% Hispanic. We offer an Associate of Applied Science degree in agriculture and have had an agricultural program since the founding of the college in 1964. Animal husbandry, natural resource management and veterinary technician are offered as specializations.

County County, the area we serve, is largely rural with a strong agricultural economy. Ranching and farming are important sectors of employment for our region. The largest dairy in Arizona is located here as is the largest greenhouse complex in the United States (Eurofresh). We have a close working relationship with the University of Arizona and are in discussion to develop a two plus two program in agriculture whereby students would have a seamless transition from Cochise College to the University which has a nationally recognized College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Designation and recognition as an HSACU would be an important step in expanding our department to better serve our students and increase our capability to train a local workforce for an important segment of our local economy. As currently defined, it is our understanding that we would meet all qualifications to be recognized as an HSACU and look forward to hearing from you regarding any other information necessary to receive this designation.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Name: Joseph Magdaleno

Institution: City University of New York, Lehman College

Lehman College is pleased to respond to the request for input on how to identify and certify an institution as an Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College or University (HSACU) and is particularly pleased to learn that Section 7129 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) will make available funding for an Endowment Fund, an Equity Grants Program, an Institutional Capacity-Building Grants Program, and a Fundamental and Applied Research Grants Program.

We recommend that all Hispanic-Serving Institutions with research and academic programs in food science, nutrition, and agricultural and plant sciences be eligible to apply for this designation. The description of Lehman's activities in these areas below can serve as an example of such an institution.

While Lehman agrees that all of these programs are valuable, we especially want to highlight the need for the Endowment Fund and the Research Grants Program. The Endowment Fund will make available scholarship funds for graduate and undergraduate students at Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Institutions who are pursuing degrees in related programs. Such support will enhance the pipeline of Hispanic students at all levels in these fields. Similarly, monies made available through the Fundamental and Applied Research Grants Program can be used to support joint research programs and partnerships between Hispanic-Serving Institutions and non-HIS research rich institutions (i.e., Lehman College and Cornell University or Lehman College and the New York Botanical Garden).

Lehman College

Lehman College of the City University of New York is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution with outstanding academic programs and affordable tuition, and the primary avenue to higher education for low-income and minority residents of the Bronx. Lehman is exceptional among the CUNY institutions for its undergraduate and graduate degree programs in food science, nutrition, and plant biology. The CUNY PhD program in Plant Sciences is based at the College and offered in partnership with the New York Botanical Garden. Additionally, Lehman faculty host and mentor post-doctoral scholars from all over the world who come to Lehman to conduct research in our plant sciences laboratories.

A four-year urban commuter college, Lehman has its own field space on campus, which makes it unique among both inner-city minority-serving institutions, and agricultural colleges and universities. By permitting Lehman to compete for an additional \$60 million in Federal funding, HSACU status will support new research and student support at the College, thereby improving its standing as a regional center for advanced research and education in the food, agricultural and plant sciences.

Lehman's faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and students are recognized for their achievements in ecological, biomedical, genetic, and nutritional research. For over 20 years, the Plant Science faculty consistently has won Federal and foundation support for its cutting-edge work. Funders include the National Science Foundation, USDA, Rockefeller Foundation, and National Institutes of Health. In the last five years alone, funding awarded for research in plant biology and crop science exceeded \$8 million.

Ongoing agricultural and plant science research includes:

- the study of antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic compound production, and their biological roles in aging, disease immunity and stress response;
 - nutritional enhancement of food crops, e.g., increasing the vitamin A content of corn;
 - genetic and biochemical processes used by crop plants to respond to stresses in their environments;
- and

- the role of plants in regulating carbon and greenhouse gases.

The faculty routinely publishes its findings in top scientific journals such as *Science*, and field-specific publications including *Applied Microbiology and Biotechnology*, *Journal of Ecology*, *Plant Physiology*, *Journal of Experimental Botany*, *Phytochemistry*, *Phytomedicine*, *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, *Plant Cell & Environment*, *Plant Physiology*, and *Food Science*, among others.

Lehman College has just broken ground on a \$250 million, three-phase science facility. The Lehman College Science Facility is designed to encourage both interdisciplinary and specialized scientific inquiry, and it will include modular laboratories for instruction and research, classrooms, state-of-the-art instrumentation, an advanced research and teaching greenhouse, and additional growing space for faculty and graduate research. This facility will expand significantly the College's research and teaching capacity in plant and agricultural sciences.

Lehman College long has had an institutional commitment to food, agricultural, and nutritional sciences, as its academic programs and strong record in research demonstrates. Lehman plans to extend its contributions in this area through the creation of a Plant Sciences Center that will serve as the nucleus for some of the activities of an Hispanic-Serving Agricultural College in the Bronx.

Name: John A. Fernández

Institution: University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez

We thank the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) for requesting our input in developing regulations for identifying and certifying candidate institutions as Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs). As 1862 stakeholders, and as a long-standing and successful Hispanic Serving Institution, the University of Puerto Rico's College of Agricultural Sciences feels especially interested in the implementation of this new Farm Bill initiative.

First, we welcome the creation of HSACUs. We at the UPR view this as an opportunity to acquire new partners for advancing a better and more sustainable agriculture. Strong partnerships with top notch HSACUs, and wise stewardship from CSREES, would indeed benefit agriculture by enhancing the development of agricultural professionals and by diversifying the scope of research and extension programs.

Nevertheless, we feel that important issues must be addressed by CSREES in selecting these new partners, as well as in designing the new program to be an effective instrument for mission advancement. First, we deem that CSREES must ensure that candidate institutions are well qualified higher education centers. We also expect that these partners offer demonstrable capacity and commitment to carry out their new mission in benefit of agriculture in their respective communities. Further, we believe that CSREES must ensure that HSACUs' strengths compliment, rather than duplicate, existing capabilities by 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions. In essence, we feel strongly that HSACUs must be selected by their demonstrable desire and capability to be solid partners with other land-grants in agricultural development, and not because the new program may be perceived by some institutions as an alternative source of funding in lean times.

Therefore, we propose that candidate institutions must demonstrate accreditation by reputable agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Higher Education. Accreditation procedures could include periodic evaluations of their agriculture teaching, research and extension programs. We trust that a higher education accreditation requirement will help assure the selection of strong institutional partners.

We also propose that HSACU candidates must demonstrate commitment to agricultural education by establishing a minimum requirement for the proportion of their students participating in agricultural education programs. Currently, around 10% of our students at UPR Mayaguez participate in agricultural education programs. We propose that a similar commitment be required of candidate institutions. We believe that such requirement would help ensure HSACU participation only to strongly committed institutions, and avoid the possibility of participation by less dedicated educational establishments.

Similarly, we believe that candidate HSACUs should be able to demonstrate commitment and experience in community development and extension. We believe that extension is paramount to ensure the success of our agricultural programs. We also consider that creating the necessary community-institutional links and capabilities needed to have a successful extension program requires experience and insight. Thus to ensure true commitment, HSACU candidates must demonstrate their prior investment in extension and community development programs. Our College of Agriculture invests over 25% percent of state funding to sustain an effective extension program. Perhaps, an appropriate measure of prior commitment could be ascertained by establishing a minimum investment in extension activities, as well as the existence of appropriate matching funds.

Finally, we would like to ratify our expressions of gratitude to CSREES for this opportunity, and to

offer our unconditional assistance and collaboration with the success of the new HSACU program, and of other CSREES programs related to serving Hispanics and agriculture.

Name: Reverend Monsignor Franklyn M. Casale

Institution: St. Thomas University

On September 22nd of this year, St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida, inaugurated a newly built \$17.8 million dollar Carnival Cruise Line Science & Technology Building. St. Thomas University is an HSI to 39% of students of Hispanic origin. This research facility is dedicated to undergraduate students with majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Our new 26,000-square-foot facility has 14 research laboratories, eight teaching laboratories, and several special purpose rooms.

Our facility includes a large environmental chamber which can simulate cold conditions to desert environments to tropical conditions for a variety of experimental studies including environmental stress and plant tolerance to changing climate conditions. Our research facility also includes an environmental laboratory currently dedicated to the study of interactions of Florida native and endangered plants and their environment.

It is equipped with a controlled environmental incubator, laminar flow bench, autoclave, pH meter, analytical balance, as well as all necessary equipment for plant DNA analysis, such as thermocyclers, microfuges, electrophoresis units, and transilluminator. To complement the environmental laboratory, we are completing plans for an adjacent greenhouse facility, easily accessible from the environmental laboratory. Our research faculty includes a plant biologist with 3 years postdoctoral experience in environmental stress research acquired at the USDA, US Horticultural Research laboratory in Ft. Pierce, FL, and a neuroscientist who has received over 1.5 million dollars in NIH and DOE grants for research on spinal chord injury. St. Thomas University offers a bachelor's degree in Biology with a specialization in Biological Research. We conduct fundamental and applied research in agricultural crops and environmental science. Interest areas of research among our Hispanic students include environmental stress in plants, organic agriculture, plant-microbe interactions, genetic analysis of native plant populations, among others.

We have an ongoing collaborative project with Florida Atlantic University on the flower biology of the red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*) a critical species of the Florida ecosystem and with the Conservation Program of Florida endangered plants at Historic Bok Sanctuary in Lake Wales, for the in vitro propagation of two of the most highly endangered Florida species, *Lupinus aridorum* and *Ziziphus celatus*, both endemic to the unique environment of the Lake Wales ridge ecosystem. Each year St. Thomas University hosts an undergraduate research symposium, where local university undergraduates present their research projects in biology by poster paper and oral presentation with awards going to the best projects. Six regional universities participated last year.

I give you all of this background with the request that you include institutions such as ours in the definition of Institutions that Offer Associate, Bachelors or Other Accredited Degree Programs on Agricultural Related Fields. At the moment our programs are encompassed simply by a degree in biology, but as you can tell by my testimony the impact on the field of agriculture will be enormous, both on the side of research and the training of graduates who will be productive in the field.

In addition, new funding from the Department of Agriculture will allow us to expand our offerings, for example, to offer an Agricultural Engineering Technology degree as well as a major in Plant Biology. With additional funding we could expand our research activities to support the South Florida Everglades Restoration project by reintroducing native plant species. Like most HSI with limited resources we leverage every dollar enormously. The University continues to receive funding from other departments such as the Department of Energy, Department of Defense, NASA, and the NIH for education and research, a total of \$16.258 million within the last 8 years. This money has been matched by the private sector in a similar amount through a capital campaign.

Please do not exclude institutions such as ours who have the capacity to make an enormous contribution.

Name: Edwin Miller

Institution: NASULGC - Academic Programs Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly

My name is Edwin Miller and it is my pleasure to serve as the current Chair of the Academic Programs Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly of NASULGC. It is in that capacity that I would like to submit the following statement regarding programs for the Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities. In addition to the statement provided below it is also provided as an attachment to this Email.

"The Academic Programs Section of the Board on Agriculture Assembly wishes to comment on the criteria utilized to identify and certify Hispanic-Serving Agriculture Colleges and Universities for purposes of implementation of those programs identified in section 7129 of FCES. We believe that the definition of Hispanic-serving Agriculture Colleges and Universities should be limited to those accredited public institutions which have (a) definitive and coherent program(s) that lead to an associate or baccalaureate degree in agriculture and related sciences as defined by the CIP codes contained in the Food Agriculture Education Information System (FAEIS)."

Name: Jeffrey Thompson

Institution: California State University, San Bernardino

On behalf of California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), I wish to provide comments on implementation of H.R. 2419: Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, also known as the 2008 Farm Bill. Section 7101 of the bill establishes the Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU's) and section 7129 authorizes five new programs for the HSACU's. Potentially these are programs for which CSUSB will be eligible to apply.

CSUSB is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution, with an enrollment of 17,066 students last Fall, including 39.3% of Hispanic origin. There are several agriculture-related fields within our academic programs:

- Environmental Sciences is a professional master's program that is an interdisciplinary degree within the Department of Chemistry and the Department of Geology. The program is designed to provide strong preparation in applied science as well as social, political, and economic aspects needed for critical decision-making for environmental issues. One area of concentration is water resources. A major component of this program is a required internship providing real-world experience in environmental science.
- Environmental Education is a Master's program designed to prepare individuals to teach environmental education effectively in indoor and outdoor settings and to all grade/age levels and enables graduates to assume leadership in environmental education in schools, nature centers, and other interpretative situations.
- Environmental Studies is an undergraduate Bachelor's degree program within the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. This is an interdisciplinary program designed for students who desire to focus on study of the environment or to prepare for an environmentally related career or graduate school.
- Nutrition and Food Sciences is an undergraduate Bachelor's degree program within the Department of Health Science and Human Ecology. This degree is appropriate for students preparing for careers dealing with foods, nutrition, or dietetics.
- Within the B.S. in Biology program is an Ecology and Evolution option. The curriculum for this Biology option provides students with the necessary courses to be eligible for entry-level Biologist, Botanist or Ecologist positions in the U.S. Forest service.
- Environmental Health Science is an undergraduate Bachelor's degree program within the Department of Health Science and Human Ecology. This degree is appropriate for students who wish to become health inspectors (i.e., Registered Environmental Health Specialist), industrial hygienists, or hazardous waste control experts.
- Management degrees are offered by the Department of Management within the College of Business and Public Administration. Degrees include a Master's in Management, a B.A. in Management, and a B.A. in Entrepreneurial Management.
- A Certificate in Urban Planning is available from the Department of Geography.

CSUSB also has additional resources that can make unique and valuable contributions towards our agriculture-related research and training activities:

- **PROXIMITY TO NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE:** CSUSB is within easy walking distance of forested public lands (San Bernardino National Forest) at the eastern edge of the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, one of the most populated regions in the U.S. Direct access to National Forest lands is an enormous asset for CSUSB in training urban-dwelling students in agriculture-related areas of ecology, wild-land management, and resource conservation.
- **WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE (WRI):** The WRI at CSUSB serves as a regional center and data repository for academics, students, policy makers, businesses, environmental groups, and community members with interests in regional water issues.

CSUSB has been involved in previous USDA programs as the recipient of four CSREES grants:

- RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS IN CONSERVATION BIOLOGY AND NATURAL RESOURCE STUDIES to Kimberlyn Williams, Department of Biology. This project implements a multi-prong approach to providing paid internships and other forms of financial support to students exploring their interests in natural resources, and performing outreach. Internships with the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and with the U.S. Forest Service will increase the base of mentors serving students from the Hispanic-Serving Institutions in this region, and should encourage and facilitate students' pursuits of higher degrees and careers in natural resource sciences and conservation biology.
- RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF BILINGUAL PRE-PROFESSIONALS IN ENVIRONMENT HEALTH SCIENCE PROGRAM to Lal Mian, Department of Health Science and Human Ecology. Low student enrollment has resulted in shortage of environmental health professionals entering into the workforce, especially bilingual pre-professionals. This program will provide internships to allow students to gain experience in environmental health, and to provide funds to further develop the environmental health science curriculum.
- PREPARING UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS FOR USDA NATURAL RESOURCE CAREERS to James Noblet and Susan Lien-Longville, CSUSB Water Resources Institute (WRI). The primary difference that this program is making for the public good is reducing the critical shortage of financially supported experiential learning programs for CSUSB students of Hispanic (35.8 percent), African American (12.6 percent) and Asian/Pacific Island/Filipino (9.1 percent) origin. The WRI Internship in Water Management program provides an opportunity for students to participate in real-world research or public policy problem-solving activities that address the impact to the Santa Ana watershed that have resulted from explosive growth, changing land use patterns and expanding urbanization into open spaces.
- RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND TRAINING IN RESTORATION ECOLOGY to Kimberlyn Williams and John Skillman, Department of Biology. The project increases the capacity of California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) to provide training in restoration ecology and related biological sciences, boosts student success in attaining a Bachelor of Science degree, and provides opportunities for students at CSUSB and two nearby Hispanic-serving community colleges (Victor Valley College and Chaffey College) to work on projects with the U.S. Forest Service, the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and researchers at University of California, Riverside, that expose them to careers and doctoral research in restoration ecology.

From these examples, you can see that CSUSB has a commitment to educating students in fields directly supporting agriculture. Further our program has a commitment to increasing the diversity of the workforce, especially for Hispanic students. The proposed programs to be housed within the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) can provide needed support to continue and expand the existing programs at our university. I wish that you would note that the activities I have described are located within several departments whose majors are not specifically listed among the proposed academic majors in agriculture areas. For example, the Department of Biology only offers majors called biology, yet the programs within the department encompass several of the proposed agriculture majors (e.g., Plant Sciences, Ecology, Natural Resources/ Conservation). As you develop the guidelines for the NIFA programs, I would urge you to list the academic programs, rather than academic majors, so as not to restrict deserving programs from participation in the NIFA programs. This would insure that you provide access and opportunity to your programs for all Hispanic students, faculty and institutions.

Name: Frank B. Ureno

Institution: Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Texas A&M University-Kingsville would like to see two issues addressed in defining HSACU programs.

1. The most appropriate method is to defined the HSI qualified schools as those with established accredited programs in agriculture that lead to a degree. These should be defined using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) originally developed by the US Department of Education. CIP codes are used nationwide and provide a standard approach to define our programs. The eligible programs could be at a 2 and 4 year HSI qualified schools that have agricultural programs, however, it seems that the 2 year schools should have an agreement with a 4 year HSACU to help move students to an advanced degree.

2. Research is one of the primary focus areas so those qualifying for these funds would be institutions that have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree, though it would be better if these programs would have a Masters program in agriculture fields as defined by the CIP codes. This would focus these limited funds to those programs who are working with the students and regions that are dealing with Hispanic agriculture and Hispanic students.

Name: Mark Bender

Institution: California State University, Stanislaus

I believe that the HSACU designation and attendant funding should be given to only institutions that award Bachelors or Associate degrees in Agriculture or a related field (Animal Science, Plant Science, Ag Engineering, Environmental Horticulture, Ag Business, etc.). Many colleges and universities, who are looking for any type of funding available, will be jumping at the chance to institute agriculture "concentrations", "options", or otherwise "less than true agriculture" programs within existing non-ag degree programs just to get in line for additional funding. This will dilute the amount of funding available for legitimate Agriculture Degree offering institutions who have the capacity to continue to serve the agriculture industry with quality agriculture graduates and to grow those programs to better serve all students. The best question to ask is how many ag or ag-related degree graduates a certain program has had over the past 5 years.
