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# Dickson

R E A L T Y

April 4, 2003

Dear Legislators,

I would like to write in hopes of encouraging you to support AB382, submitted by Sheila Leslie. This bill requires the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada to establish an Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy.

As a businessperson in Nevada I would support the UNR Latino Institute. I believe in order for our state to be great, all residents need to be part of the process. To date, a significant part of our state's population reflect a lack of research about the needs of their community, which translates into the inability of us all as residents to work on common problems.

I understand that the Institute will work with many of the state's existing programs while producing and disseminating research that will help aid policy makers in decision making as it relates to the Latino community. The size of our Latino population requires us all to create outreach and retention, particularly in educational programs that will foster excellence and leadership in all our communities reflecting the diversity of our state.

I hope that Nevada can join the few states that have taken a leadership role in creating a program that will enhance the quality of life for the Latino community thus enhancing the quality of life for all Nevadans. Our desirability as a place to live and work depends upon looking for a common vision for the many rich cultures that create our state.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Nancy Fennell  
President  
Dickson Realty  
Dickson Incline Properties  
Reno/Sparks/N Lake Tahoe NV

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION  
DATE: 4/7/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT 0  
SUBMITTED BY: ASSEMBLY WOMAN LESLIE

I am writing in support of AB382, introduced by Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie. My teaching schedule does not permit me to be there in person to support this important measure, but I would like to speak to the importance of an Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy, not only to the University but to the community it would serve.

As everyone is well aware, the Hispanic/Latino community is the fastest growing and most underrepresented minority community in Nevada. As a land grant institution, one of the primary missions and responsibilities of UNR is to serve the entire community as the mission statement itself states, the University of Nevada resolves to:

“Emphasize undergraduate, graduate and professional programs which meet the needs of the citizens of Nevada.”

“Contribute to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge that will help to improve society at the state, regional, and national levels.”

“Reflect and respect the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the citizens of Nevada in its academic programs, support programs and in the composition of its faculty, administration, staff and student body.”

These three items speak directly to the necessity of an Institute for Latin Research and Advocacy at UNR. Currently there is no such program or anything similar to address the growing needs of the Latino community of students on campus or the community at large. Latino students on campus are in dire need of center to which they can turn for direction and mentoring. Many of the Hispanic students who arrive at UNR are overwhelmed by the system and often feel isolated from the main student body. An Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy could play a primary role for ensuring the success of Latino students by giving them a sense of belonging, a concrete resource to aid in their academic advancement, and a sense of responsibility to reach their full potential and give back to the institution that helped them achieve their goal of higher education and success. I foresee such an institute as having a great future and becoming one of the best and most influential—in the sense of the lives it will influence—programs on campus.

With regard to the function of an Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy off campus, the opportunities to serve the community are virtually limitless. It could serve as a primary source for recruitment of students, for community education, and outreach efforts. I would like to stress that this would not merely be of benefit to the Latino community, but that it would serve all Nevadans. I urge you to give serious consideration to the need for such an Institute, to the benefits that would be reaped from it, and to the responsibility of University to offer a range of

university programs, provide community and public service, and reflect and respect the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of the citizens of Nevada; all this according to its own mission statement, which presently is not being fulfilled regarding the Latino population either on campus or off.

Sincerely,



Darrell B. Lockhart, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Foreign Languages & Literatures/UNR

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**Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales**

**P.O. Box 13782  
Reno, Nevada 89507**

April 3, 2003

Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie  
Nevada State Legislature  
Carson City, Nevada

Dear Assemblywoman Leslie,

I support AB382 because I know your proposed Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy will foster in the Latino community greater self-understanding and self-governance, more effective participation in the democratic political process, and stronger bonds between Latinos and other groups.

I can see how the Institute's work will be a vehicle through which Latinos in Nevada can continue to celebrate and embrace their unique and diverse Hispanic identities while building community via the dissemination of knowledge and research findings that relate to them. Moreover, I believe the Institute will help discover a myriad gems within Nevada's Latino population □ among the young and the not-so-young -- a gold mine for so long untapped.

I join you and my Latino compatriots, as well as the many friends of Latinos, who together eagerly await a progressive step from Nevada's legislators. That step, of course, is the passing of AB382.

Sincerely,



Sylvia Ontaneda-Bernales

April 6, 2003

The Honorable Sheila Leslie  
c/o Nevada Assembly 401 S. Carson St.  
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Representative Leslie:

As a member of the Latino community, a University of Nevada alumnus, a Nevada native, and a proponent of, and participant in, cultural education and research, I am writing to you in support of Bill AB382, an act for the establishment of the Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy at UNR.

As you know, Nevada, like the rest of the colonized world in particular, is a melting pot where a number of diverse cultural backgrounds are represented. Unfortunately, there exist many misconceptions and stereotypes about – and, I should add, *among* – so-called "Latinos" in our state, whose identities are rooted not only in the United States but in countries near and far to our borders. It is, therefore, most important to educate – as it is in any culture – so that the discrimination and intolerance caused by misunderstanding and ignorance might be combated.

We have witnessed of late in areas such as the Middle East, Ireland, the Balkans, Spain and Indonesia (and in the not-so-distant past the United States) large-scale discrimination and intolerance based in ill-perceived and outmoded misconceptions about the cultural differences of others. Such injustices should not be allowed to exist, or to proliferate, among our own because of disinterest in, or neglect of, the truth – especially in a state so highly regarded for its openness of heart, mind, and law. Nevada and our institutions of higher learning have historically been pioneers. With the Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy (and I would personally add, Studies) at UNR we have another opportunity to be leaders by meeting the needs of our Latino community whose struggle for justice, tolerance, understanding and equal opportunity should not go unattended. Such an institution is long overdue in a state where the Hispanic culture and language have been an integral part of our history and where Latinos have long been the fastest-growing, yet to great degree underappreciated, sector of the population.

I have every confidence that the short- and long-term benefits of the Latino Institute will not only be realized among the ever-growing Latino community but among our continually expanding, ethnically diverse student population. It will also be a cultural resource for every sector of our community, from industry and tourism to faith and education. And with proper support and good leadership, the Institute can become a positive example of integration on the regional, national, and international levels.

I commend you for bringing Bill AB382 before the Nevada legislature and wish you every best wish in winning unanimous support for it.

Sincerely,

Christopher Sean Savoy-Ontaneda  
VP of Operations, Andean Explorers Foundation  
Chairman, Foundation Orchestra Association  
Executive Director, Young Explorers International  
Canon, International Community of Christ

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Dear Legislators,

As a Reno resident and Spanish professor at UNR since 1993, I have long been aware of the need to address the concerns of our ever-growing Latino communities, and of doing so within an institutional context and on a consistent basis. Establishing a Latino Institute at UNR will go far to address that need, not only by providing a center for conducting scholarly research in Latino Studies and for disseminating information relevant to our Latino communities, but also by fomenting outreach and ensuring retention in educational programs, by fostering excellence and leadership, and by helping the communities hone an effective voice that will be heard in the chambers where decision-makers implement social and political change.

A well-funded Latino Institute can function both as a magnet to attract gifted members of the community and as a bridge between a wide array of university programs and society at large. Among those programs are the graduate and undergraduate programs offered by the Spanish section of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, as well as many others, including the Latin American Studies program and majors offered by the Department of International Relations and other departments. But the Latino Institute will serve as more than a symbiotic focal point for these programs; it will reach out to establish partnerships in Washoe and Clark counties, in rural areas, and in other cities nationwide where similar programs thrive-like the Latino Institute in Phoenix, Arizona-and it will do so with a view to enhancing the quality of life for the Latino community, to sharing and enhancing its rich culture, to meeting its challenges for the future, and to making valuable contributions to society.

These views are my own, and are not meant to determine what direction the UNR Latino Institute project should take. They are meant, instead, to impress upon you my strong support for this project, which Emma Sepúlveda and Laura Vargas have worked hard to bring to fruition, at a time when, given Nevada's demographics, it could not be more timely or pertinent.

Sincerely,

Fred de Rafols

  
Associate Professor and

Graduate Director in Spanish

University of Nevada

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April 7, 2003

Sheila Leslie, Assemblywoman  
825 Humboldt Street  
Reno, Nevada 89509

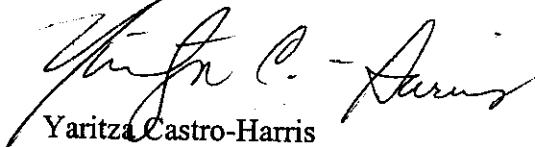
Dear Ms. Leslie:

I am writing this letter in support of AB382 requiring the Board of Regents to establish an Institute for Latino Research and Advocacy at the University of Nevada.

As a Latina, an interim administrative faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno and a former graduate student from the Counseling & Educational Psychology department, I attest for the need of research in the State of Nevada regarding the Latino community. While the Latino community increases in numbers so does their needs, issues such as high school dropout rates, immigration, self-esteem, percentage of people that do not have a handle of the English language, lack of student enrollment in higher education, etc. How can they be helped? What issues must be addressed first? What has been done and what have we not addressed, that needs to be is what I am hoping the Institute can help answer.

I have counseled students both Latino and other minorities, during my internships at elementary and middle schools with a lack of future dreams. Parents that do not understand how to socially negotiate in this new system and new environment that they have immigrated into. Young adults asking me, where could they take classes to learn English in to order to achieve a better job, therefore, a better life. We need to understand that people came to the United States with a dream and translated that dream into the State of Nevada that is now their home. I ask the legislature to help the Latino community to obtain these dreams of advancement through the completion of an Institute created to research and advocate for Latinos.

Sincerely,



Yaritza Castro-Harris  
Tutor Coordinator  
University of Nevada, Reno

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April 7, 2003

Sheila Leslie, Assemblywoman  
825 Humboldt Street  
Reno, Nevada 89509

Dear Ms. Leslie:

I am writing in behalf of the University of Nevada Latino Alumni Chapter.

We are a recognized organization of the UNR Alumni Association. The mission of the Latino Alumni Chapter is to continue the relationship between Latino graduates and the University of Nevada, through special events planning, scholarship support, and advocacy in behalf of Latino undergraduates attending UNR.

We write you today in support of AB382, the establishment of the UNR Latino Institute. We strongly believe having a Latino Institute would address the needs of our students and our community. As UNR alumni, we understand the importance of having an Institute that would strengthen and promote our cultural heritage in the university. As UNR Alumni, we strongly believe the Institute would greatly improve the quality of the students educational experience by addressing students related issues such as immigration, recruitment, college enrollment and completion, financial aid, scholarships, academic and career counseling.

The Institute will provide leadership in having the university recognize the importance of providing culturally and linguistically sensitive materials to our communities. The Latino Alumni Chapter strongly believes our graduating high school students are not being sought out by the university, and are also not provided the necessary information about the resources and programs available to assist them to attend college. We affirm this by our own experience and knowledge. The Institute would coordinate to develop a recruitment plan and implement outreach activities to encourage the enrollment of undergraduate students of Latino background. In addition, the Institute would plan and implement strategies to retain and graduate those who enroll.

The Institute would also be able to develop strong working relationships with Latino community organizations, families of prospective students, high school counselors from schools with strong Latino presence, community college advisors, and UNR faculty, staff, students and alumni who have interest in promoting the presence of Latino students on our campus.

Please support AB 283, the establishment of the UNR Latino Institute. If you have any questions regarding the Latino Alumni Chapter and/or would like more information about students experiences attending UNR, please feel free to contact me at my email address [aldama73@yahoo.com](mailto:aldama73@yahoo.com).

Sincerely,

*Oscar Espinoza-Parra*

Oscar Espinoza-Parra, President  
UNR - Latino Alumni Chapter

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