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The UMass/Boston Friday Report #7

News and information about and for
the Community from the Chancellor's Office

December 13, 1991

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Latino Life Examined at Conference Today -- As you read this, the Gaston Institute is co-sponsoring an all-day symposium in the main auditorium of Wheatley Hall, presenting research on various issues of concern to Latinos, who are the Commonwealth's fastest growing minority population. Major reports are being presented by these members of the University community:

- Gaston director **Miren Uriarte** reports that Latino residents of Boston who participate in employment and job training programs are less likely than other groups to actually find work. According to her research, even if they do get jobs they generally earn salaries that fall below the federal poverty standards. According to Uriarte, Latinos are typically steered away from job skills training programs and instead are enrolled in bilingual and remedial education classes, leading to low job placement rates. In addition, Latinos have lower earnings, a greater probability of being unemployed, more instances of job loss due to firing and more layoffs than either whites or blacks.

- **Michael Stone**, of CPCS' community planning group, found that 60% of Latino households are "shelter poor," meaning that the impact of housing costs on their incomes does not allow them to adequately meet their non-housing needs. In his study Stone says that Latino households that earn low incomes are twice as likely to live in substandard housing as non-Latinos with the same incomes. Latinos in metropolitan Boston have been particularly hard hit by the rising housing costs in Boston during the last decade because -- on average -- their households are larger, younger and much poorer than those of other groups.

- **Carole Upshur**, also of CPCS' community planning group, is the co-author of a report that addresses the question *What do Latino children need to succeed in school?* The study, conducted in collaboration with **Antonia Darder** of the Claremont (California) Graduate School Education Department, was initiated in response to growing public concern regarding the academic achievement of Latino children in the public schools. Among their findings:

- ¶ For the most part, school administrators did not identify or define the unique needs of Latino children. They seldom displayed a strong theoretical understanding of issues related to bicultural development and its implications for educators of Latino children.

- ¶ Many of the teachers focused on deficits in the children or difficulties in the home and environment, while only a few identified the school structure and the lack of appropriate educational materials and resources as the primary reasons for the lack of educational achievement among Latino children.

- ¶ The majority of teachers and school administrators emphasized promoting literacy in English and gave less attention to helping Latino children achieve literacy in both languages. Latino children seemed

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ambivalent about speaking Spanish in school because of the way they were then treated by some teachers and other students.

Upshur and Darder emphasized that awareness of the unique educational needs of Latino children must receive increasing attention in Boston's public schools. The pedagogical and cultural understanding essential to improving the educational achievement of Latino children must be developed by principals and teachers.

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Campus Notes -- **Al Brill** reports revenue figures for the University's many fund raising projects are ahead of last year's pace. To date, a total of \$584,754 has been raised through annual fund gifts, grants from corporations and foundations, matching gifts, income from special events and drives, and donations to WUMB-FM. The development team is focusing on raising money for 1) Graduate College of Education fellowships; 2) the College of Management; 3) a College of Nursing laboratory; and 4) enhancement of the science program. • From the Center for Survey Research, news that **Lois Biener** presented a paper about Working Well, the national worksite health promotion program, at the American Public Health Association meetings in Atlanta... **Jack Fowler** was at the Training Institute of the Government Accounting Office in Washington to conduct sessions on procedures for testing survey questions. • The New England Resource Center for Higher Education is preparing for a workshop on January 31 titled *Collaboration in Undergraduate Education*. Those involved include **Karen Romer**, associate dean at Brown University, **William Whipple**, associate dean at Albright College, and the center's **Zelda Gamson**.

• For the first time, the McCormack Institute will be examined regarding its goals and policies by a national committee of political scientists. The prestigious external review group -- on our campus next Monday and Tuesday -- includes **Bernard C. Cohen**, former academic vice president, University of Wisconsin, Madison; **Margaret T. Gordon**, dean, Graduate School of Public Affairs, University of Washington, Seattle; **Matthew Holden, Jr.**, Doherty Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; **Dennis L. Meadows**, professor of management systems and director, Institute for Policy and Social Science Research, University of New Hampshire; **Alan Rosenthal**, director, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University; and **Donald E. Stokes**, dean, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University. • **Marietta Schwartz** (Chemistry) has been chosen program chair and president-elect for the New England Chapter of the Association for Women in Science. • **Joseph J. Cooney** (Environmental Sciences) is now president of the northeast branch of the American Society for Microbiology. • About 15 physics teachers attended an open-house, hands-on workshop presented by Physics Department faculty (**John Shane**, **Nareshchandra Shah** and **Martin Posner**) covering such topics as electricity and magnetism, electric circuits and modern physics. • The Massachusetts Broadcasters Association has bestowed on WUMB-FM five awards, including first place honors for the Best Community Awareness Campaign. The association recognized the station's series on pediatric AIDS, broadcast last April as part of the Commonwealth's Pediatric AIDS Awareness Week activities.