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NEWS RELEASE

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U. of I., Legislative Latino Caucus partner in Policy Institute *IGPA collaborates with nonpartisan Latino study group*

CHICAGO—The University of Illinois and the state Legislative Latino Caucus today forged a partnership to establish a nonpartisan public policy institute to identify and address issues critical to the state and its growing Latino population.

The Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation Public Policy Institute has long been an ambition of policymakers and community leaders in Springfield and throughout the state. The legislative Latino institute becomes a reality with an agreement in which it will partner with the University of Illinois and the university's Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA).

The legislative Latino institute will be located in offices at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Illinois at Springfield, and through the IGPA it also will draw on expertise at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

“The institute will draw on the knowledgeable faculty and staff of the University's three campuses through IGPA to access high-level research and technical assistance. The outcome of this collaboration will be well-informed policy decisions that relate to the Latino community and its role in our society, and that benefits our entire state and its population,” University President B. Joseph White said at a ceremony to sign the agreement-in-principle.

White was joined in announcing the agreement by State Sen. Miguel del Valle and State Rep. Edward Acevedo, co-chairs of the Illinois Legislative Caucus, and Paul Lopez, vice-chair of the board of directors of the Illinois Legislative Caucus Foundation. Also participating was Robert Rich, Director of the U. of I. Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

The legislative Latino institute will track trends in the Latino community, analyze issues and formulate policies for consideration in addressing those concerns. The Illinois Latino population ranks fifth largest in the nation and in 2000 accounted for 12.3 percent of the state's population. Nationally and in Illinois, Latinos make important contributions to their communities and the economy, but they face issues in access to quality education, health care, employment and housing.

“The creation of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation Public Policy Institute will ensure that Latinos throughout the state are able to shape the policies that affect our daily lives,” Senator del Valle said.

Representative Acevedo agreed: “The Legislative Latino Public Policy Institute is extremely important in assuring a strong and well-grounded voice in formulating a course of action to address issues impacting the entire state, and it is an honor for me to be a part of it.”

State Sen. Martin Sandoval said the collaboration with the University of Illinois will connect the University’s research and policy expertise with Latino advocates and policy makers. “I am proud to work with the University of Illinois on this innovative partnership with the Latino Caucus Foundation. Again, Illinois is taking the lead,” Sandoval said.

“The Institute will help create hope and opportunity for the entire Latino community in Illinois,” said Lopez, senior vice president of Park Federal Savings Bank in Chicago. “I am proud to be part of the Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus Foundation on this historic day.”

The University’s Institute of Government and Public Affairs has been a nonpartisan resource for state legislators and other policy makers since 1949 with faculty experts across the three campuses in political science, economics, public health, law and sociology.

“IGPA has a long tradition of working with legislators and other policy-makers on critical issues facing Illinois and the nation. We are proud to partner with the Latino Caucus Foundation on research and public service initiatives to serve improve public policy which has an impact on the Latino community,” Director Robert F. Rich said.

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