

**Potential Networking Functions of the Nuevo South Collaborative  
Communication Brief # 3-2010**

David Griffith, PhD<sup>1</sup>  
June 20, 2010

Over the past several years, paralleling the growth of North Carolina's Latino population has been an increasingly complex array of organizations, institutions, and individuals interested in working with the state's Latino communities to celebrate Latino culture, address their health and human rights needs, develop their leadership capabilities, or engage them for other humanitarian reasons. Unfortunately, too often these entities have developed with few resources, tied to local areas or small communities and relatively isolated from other entities with similar or overlapping interests. Organizations and institutions working in isolation run the risk of becoming narrow in their views toward Latino communities, paternal or exclusionary in their interactions with them, and dependent on a single client base (e.g. immigrants from one community or state in Mexico, migrant farmworkers, etc.) that encourages them to jealously guard the access they have gained. By the same token, immigrants who receive assistance, information, or other goods and services from only one or two sources may become overly dependent on those sources for their well-being.

Increasing the general body of knowledge about the resources and services available to Latinos in North Carolina, and creating a forum to expand the discourse among entities interested in Latino lives and livelihoods, could strengthen such entities through cooperative partnerships of the kind that we envision between the university and North Carolina's Latino communities. It could also establish a venue where Latinos could express their ideas about how they would like to interact with various agencies, organizations, and grassroots groups, including what they might expect of them and how much their expectations conform to what various groups are able to provide.

Among the functions of the Nuevo South Collaborative could be the development of a network of these organizations, institutions, and individuals interested in engaging Latino communities—a network denser and better connected than the loose, informal network that exists today, yet a network that retains the flexibility to respond to developments in the media or the circumstances of immigrants quickly and effectively. Initially this could consist of a list of the entities described above, each entered with a brief description of its mission and its contact

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor, Department of Anthropology, East Carolina University.

information. From this, individual members of the network could identify existing linkages with other network members as well as identify potential linkages based on overlapping interests.

Once the list begins to take shape, we expect we will begin to identify areas of specialization and concentration—categories of entities that provide unique opportunities or services for Latinos across Eastern North Carolina and the state. Two such categories that come to mind, for example, are health and entrepreneurship. Under the general category of health, we could include organizations permanently tied to Pitt Memorial Hospital or ECU’s nursing school as well as organizations that have engaged in temporary, irregular health-related projects, such as AMEXCAN’s use of its facilities to train *promotoras*. Those entities actively involved with entrepreneurship could include youth groups that have organized or

participated in business proposal writing contests at public schools and local Community Colleges that have sponsored workshops to train aspiring entrepreneurs how to use computer resources.

Identifying the network will constitute a first step in determining the full range of activities currently underway in this part of the state and elsewhere. To begin this process, the Nuevo South initiative could develop a brief “network form”—posted on the website—that groups or individuals could use to provide their contact information and outline their interests in and work with the Latino community in North Carolina. The information from this form could then be used to create an Internet-based directory that could be continually updated by ECU personnel.

***Possible fields to include on the Network Form:***

- Organization name and contact information.
- Brief history of organization (optional).
- Areas of service.
- Groups targeted.
- Services provided/ Mission statement.
- Interests in collaboration, research, or community engagement.