Submitter by: Flavius Killebrew, President
Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi

Subject: Approval of Concept paper to establish the Center for Mexican American Research (CMAR)

Proposed Board Action:

Review and approve the concept to establish the Center for Mexican American Research (CMAR) at Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi. Assuming acceptance of the concept a full proposal will be submitted for consideration at the March meeting of the Board of Regents.

Background Information:

Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) has existed since 1990. Previously a two-year upper division school, known as Corpus Christi State University (CCSU), the school was brought into the A&M System in order to more adequately serve the needs of the surrounding area, which is heavily Mexican American. The City of Corpus Christi alone is 54.33% Hispanic. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that, by the year 2050, Hispanics will account for 25% of the population. As the number of Hispanics has grown over time, so have the number of Hispanics attending institutions of higher education. Fifty percent of such students attend one of the 242 Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) around the nation, of which we are one. Thus, given the changing demographic nature of the state and the nation, TAMUCC is poised to stand at the cutting edge of artistic, social, economic, educational, health, political, and historical production relevant to a growing Hispanic population. A CMAR would promote such scholarly and creative activities enhancing the university’s public profile, strengthening ties to the community, enriching the research mission of the university, promoting the Arts program on campus, an area leader in dramatic, artistic and musical activities. Through all of these various actions the university will create an enhanced and stimulating intellectual environment for students who will benefit through new research and performance opportunities, as well as through curriculum enhancement.

Funding Implications:

CMAR will be funded from a new University budget line. Concomitantly, the Center’s Director will work with appropriate University personnel such as the College Deans, the Chief Financial Officer, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and the Title V Administrator to raise money for Center initiatives, and to build an endowment for future Center sustenance.
CONCEPT PAPER
Center for Mexican American Research (CMAR)
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
January 23, 2005

Proposal

Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi proposes to establish a Center for Mexican American Research (CMAR). The Center will work closely with each of the colleges and other Centers and Institutes to promote research, collaborate with the Mexican American Studies program (MXAS), and serve the local and broader community to inform policy, promote enriched educational experiences for students, and deepen ties between the University and the community.

Mission

CMAR will be an interdisciplinary research/teaching/service unit at TAMUCC dedicated to producing, gathering, and disseminating knowledge and cultural production focused on issues of Mexican American interest. Research conducted through the Center will ingrain itself on the local landscape by contributing to knowledge in various fields, offering policy insight and direction, actively involving students and promoting stronger community relations. Additionally, CMAR will serve the broader community by facilitating cultural production, guest speakers, and public seminars.

Justification

Texas currently has approximately 20.8 million people, of whom 6.7 million (32.2%) are of Hispanic (primarily Mexican American) descent. Just within the past year, Hispanics have surpassed African Americans as the nation’s largest minority group. In Corpus Christi, the population is majority Hispanic, the largest segment of which is Mexican American. A Center for Mexican American Research can, therefore, help TAMUCC better serve its charge to serve the region and live up to the promise expressed in Momentum 2015, the University’s plan for the next decade. Indeed, CMAR’s mission speaks directly to all but one (Imperative V “achieving doctoral comprehensive status”) of the Imperatives identified in “Momentum 2015.” Moreover, CMAR looks forward to enhancing the University’s research and teaching missions and more fully integrating the University and the community in mutually beneficial ways. Corpus Christi is home to the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the American GI Forum, two organizations of national impact. Hence, Corpus Christi is not only historically rich, it also provides a living laboratory for research on business practices, health care provision, innovative pedagogy, political theory and practice, as well as for exploration of Mexican American historical, sociological, artistic, and cultural themes.
Goals

The Center intends to serve the region and create leading research, community involvement models, and student programs to use as paradigmatic foundations for other areas facing similar demographic, economic, educational, and social situation. To this end, CMAR will:

* work with faculty to generate external funding for inter-disciplinary research to include funding for student research assistants and result in products that inform public policy, impact health and social welfare, enhance research efforts in science and technology, shape educational processes (pedagogy or administration), or otherwise contribute to the expansion of knowledge relating to Mexican American issues;
* work with various departments of the Bell Library to gather and promote materials relevant to the Mexican American experience in all disciplines, specifically as it relates to collecting valuable research resources (such as the Hector P. Garcia papers) which can, in turn, be made available to faculty, students and scholars from around the world;
* work to retain current faculty and attract new scholars focused on Mexican American issues;
* work with Title V, Office of Admissions, Degree Counselors and other relevant groups to develop strategies for attracting, retaining and graduating students with a desire to focus on Mexican American topics of interest;
* seek opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to study abroad, gain research funding, enter contests, present papers, get published, apply to graduate programs;
* offer a speaker series that will involve academic and popular speakers and a film series to enrich the intellectual atmosphere on campus and in the community;
* promote art exhibits, concerts, and theatre productions that deal with Mexican American themes;
* cooperate with degree programs such as the Mexican American Studies Minor, Spanish, and others, to enhance the challenging intellectual climate on campus; and
* act as a bridge between the island university and the local, regional, national, and global communities.

Governance and Advisory Structure

Guidance for the development and implementation of the Center will be provided by an internal CMAR Advisory Council with representation from the following constituencies: students, staff, faculty, library, administration, and the community to inform the Center’s direction for maximizing participation and outreach. Guidance will also be provided by an external CMAR Advisory Council, comprised of scholars in the field, to inform the intellectual direction of the Center.
**Resource Requirements**

*Office space and equipment
*Staff support (1 FTE Director, first year, half-time FTE Director each subsequent year until change is required; 1 FTE Administrative Assistant; part-time technology/graphic design specialist; two graduate or undergraduate student assistants to work with the Administrative Assistant)
*Maintenance & Operation money for equipment/supplies
*Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR) membership ($2,000 annually)
*Director’s salary
*Speaker and film series funding
*Meeting space

*An annual budget of $135,000 is requested for each of the first two years, with adjustments to be made in accordance with the results of a performance review as adjudged by the advisory councils, the Provost and the Center Director.

**Intra-University Collaboration**

The Center envisions working with on-campus institutions such as the Graduate College, as well as the Office of Research, Special Collections and Archives, Office of Institutional Advancement, Title V, Building Engagement and Attainment for Minority Students (BEAMS), student groups, and individual faculty in all of the colleges.

**External University Collaboration**

CMAR also plans on interacting with our colleagues in College Station, as well as with other Centers around the state through the Texas Consortium of Mexican American Centers, a recently formed consortium consisting of directors of Mexican American Studies Centers from The University of Texas, Texas A&M University, University of Texas-Arlington, The University of Texas-El Paso and University of Houston. Further, the Center will interact with other centers nationally through membership in the Inter-University Program for Latino Research (IUPLR), a nation-wide consortium of university-based Latino research centers. IUPLR is dedicated to promoting policy oriented research among its member campuses and fostering inter-campus cooperation in such efforts.