

SUMMARY REPORT

Strategic Planning Meeting:

Penn State Extension Engagement with the Pennsylvania Latinx Communities

September 16-17, 2019

Justification

As the United States increasingly becomes more multi-cultural, the College of Agricultural Sciences (CAS) must take the lead and continue to expand service for culturally diverse groups. Due to the current demographic changes, Latinxs' * role in all sectors of society has been increasing in importance, in leadership and in numbers. U.S. Census Bureau data, analyzed by the Pew Research Center, shows that Latinxs represent 7.8% of Pennsylvanians and the Latinx population in the state reached 1 million residents in 2019. Of the 12 states with at least 1 million Hispanics, Pennsylvania saw the fastest population growth, 38% from 2010 to 2019^{1,2}. Latinxs play a critical role in agriculture and the overall US workforce and economy, and their influence increasing.

The Latinx population is indispensable to Pennsylvania agriculture, and fully integrated into all aspects of the agricultural enterprise. For example, the rate at which Latinx workers move into management and business ownership is increasing. From 2007 to 2012, the number of Hispanic[†] operated farms in Pennsylvania increased 24% and in 2017 there were 760 Latinx producers³. Likewise, Latinxs' educational achievements are also steadily increasing in PA. For example, PA Latinxs graduate at 10% higher rates from four-year institutions than Latinx students nationwide, and 12.7% of PA Latinx adults had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2014^{4,5}. Moreover, some Penn State campuses, such as Penn State Hazleton, are Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions with an over 20% Latinx student body. These educational gains will play a key role in today's global economy as Latinxs boost their influence and purchasing power. That is, these factors have led to an increase in Latinx purchasing power of over 45% since 2008, which is a faster rate than for the overall population, and it will reach \$1.72 trillion in 2020⁶. Specifically, for the agricultural sector, higher education should lead to a higher number of Latinxs in professional agriculture positions.

While Latinxs work and lead in all sectors of the economy, they continue to be employed in successive waves of immigrant farmworkers. Historically farmworkers were employed in tree fruit, vegetable, and mushroom harvests as a temporary, migratory labor force. However, today, Latinx farmworkers are increasingly settled as year-round workers in these and other industries, offering more permanent economic support to their local communities.

The integration of Latinxs throughout the agricultural enterprise and broader economy, combined with the steady growth of the Latinx population in PA, result in the need for new outreach strategies to achieve Penn State Extension's (PSE) mission of community engagement and education for all Pennsylvanians. For the past decade, several isolated efforts have been

undertaken within the CAS to provide programming to diverse Latinx stakeholders. Latinx people face constraints to participation in PSE programming such as language, cultural, and access barriers. Strategies to address these and other challenges will need to be as diverse as the demographics of these stakeholders.

We need a systematic change in how we develop programming to involve, engage, and impact Latinx stakeholders and fulfill our mission as a Land Grant institution. According to a guide for working with Latinx populations, written by psychology researchers Koss-Chioino and Vargas, “to successfully engage Latinx audiences, particularly first- and second-generation Latinxs, programs must be culturally responsive; that is, they must reflect the cultural traditions, beliefs, and values of the people.”⁷ Both Penn State Extension and communities across the Commonwealth will benefit when PSE builds stronger relationships with all potential extension stakeholders from Pennsylvania Latinx communities. The purpose of this document is to present Latinx stakeholder testimonials, identified needs, and proposed action items for the pursuit of effective, focused, and sustainable outreach strategies. Broader input from Pennsylvania Latinx stakeholders is still needed, however, and this will require a dedicated marketing and communication effort.

*Latinx is used as a gender-neutral term for people who originate from Latin America, derived from gendered terms Latino and Latina.

†Hispanic is often used interchangeably with Latinx, Latino, or Latina, but more precisely refers to people who originate from a Spanish-speaking country, regardless of race.

¹US Census Data, 2010, and Population Estimates, 2019.

²Krogstad, JM. (2020, July 10). “Hispanics have accounted for more than half of total U.S. population growth since 2010. Pew Research Center. <https://pewrsr.ch/324NHu4>

³USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, Census of Agriculture, State Profiles, 2012 and 2017

⁴“Latino College Completion: Pennsylvania.” Excelencia in Education.

<https://www.edexcelencia.org/research/Latino-College-Completion-Pennsylvania-PA>

⁵(January 19, 2016). “2016 State Election Fact Sheets, Latinos in the 2016 Election: Pennsylvania.” Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/fact-sheet/latinos-in-the-2016-election-pennsylvania/>

⁶Weeks, M. (2015, September 24). “Asians, Hispanics driving the U.S. Economy forward, according to UGA study.” UGA Today. <https://news.uga.edu/2015-multicultural-economy-report/>

⁷Koss-Chioino, J. D., & Vargas, L. A. (1999). *Working with Latino youth: Culture, development, and context*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Executive Summary

The Latinx Agricultural Network (LAN) is a strategic planning group at Penn State consisting of graduate students, extension educators, faculty, and administrators who seek to enhance Penn State’s engagement with its Pennsylvania Latinx stakeholders (see Appendix A for more background detail on the steps that led to this meeting). With support mainly from two Penn State Extension Impact Grants^{1,2}, LAN established an ad hoc advisory group of Latinx community leaders, whom were invited to participate with Penn State extension educators, faculty, students, and administrators in a strategic planning meeting (Appendix B: Attendee list; Appendix C: Agenda). The goal was to help determine how Penn State Extension could

collaborate with Latinx stakeholders to support professional development and productivity, facilitate satisfaction in their workplaces, and promote a high quality of life.

The strategic planning meeting began with a session for the Latinx community leaders only, which was aimed at introducing the leaders to Extension and at gathering input on their impressions about Extension and on their communities' needs. Then Extension members joined this group and there was further discussion of Extension's capabilities and programs. The group then heard from Dr. Brent Hales, the new Director of Penn State Extension, and heard a presentation about the the changing demographics of Latinx in agriculture. Next, the group learned about the origins of this effort, which was spurred by the work of two Latinx graduate students in the College of Agricultural Sciences (CAS). Patreese Ingram, the assistant dean for multicultural affairs in CAS, provided the group with tools and a thought-provoking video to overcome roadblocks to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These activities all took place during the morning of the first day of the meeting. To end the morning session of Day 1, the entire group voted on the highest priorities among needs suggested by Latinx leaders earlier in the morning. Small groups then brainstormed the background on, questions about, opportunities surrounding, and barriers to the top eight needs. After returning for a whole group discussion, the group voted to identify the top five issues, which became the subject of focused discussions during the Day 2 sessions.

Day 2 started with the group discussing questions that remained for the Latinx leaders about Extension, such as how to broaden the range of people who participate in Extension trainings. Group members then chose one of the top five issues to delve into. Small groups identified goals (1-, 5-, and 10-year plans) and strategies for the issue, as well as needs and gaps. The whole group came back together to discuss the qualities that people would like to see in the group leading this initiative. Next, individually and then in small groups, participants brainstormed the potential structure for the new group (aka Latinx Center or Latinx Community of Practice) and how it might interact with Latinx stakeholders, the rest of Extension, the College of Agricultural Sciences, the university, and beyond. This session closed the meeting.

Following Latinx and PSU feedback on this report, the LAN will draft a proposal for the new center and share it with the college and/or university. The proposal will include a budget and action items. There is overwhelming support for the college to engage this meeting's attendees (Latinx community leaders) and members of the LAN in strategic planning to meet the needs of Latinx stakeholders. This will require CAS marketing and communications departments to actively collaborate with LAN members to ensure that all Latinx stakeholders are adequately served. A Product Development Process (PDP) should be one first step in developing a comprehensive plan for extension and research.

Members of the current Latinx Agricultural Network and those who join later will work together to identify additional grant opportunities and funding streams to further the action items identified here and the goals of the subsequent strategic plan. The data gleaned from this meeting will provide justification for other grants.

¹ Bull et al., 2019. Evaluation of Penn State Extension’s Service to the Latinx Community and Development of Strategic Policy Changes to Enhance that Effort.

²Gorgo-Gourovitch et al., 2019. Extension Horticulture Outreach Program for Latino/a Growers and Farm Workers

Major Findings and Action Items of this Report

Below, we highlight the key findings and action items identified at this strategic planning meeting of Latinx community leaders, Penn State Extension (PSE) educators, faculty, staff, and students interested in supporting Latinx communities. These findings reveal a need for an institutional commitment that includes sustainable funding for long-term engagement with Latinx communities. We propose the establishment of a Latinx Extension and Research Center to address both the needs outlined here and those that will develop as the Latinx communities evolve.

Communication

Key Finding -1

Latinx community leaders (LCLs) are aware that PSU conducts agricultural research and provides quality science-based agricultural education, but they say it is difficult to find information in Spanish if needed, and they are unclear of the scope of services offered to them and which experts to contact with specific questions.

Action Item

1. The College of Agricultural Sciences creates a marketing plan to reach Spanish Speakers in the Commonwealth.
 - a. Make an intentional effort to identify the audience and how to reach them.
 - b. Create a Spanish landing page for PSE with links to resources, contact lists, and descriptions of programs targeted for Spanish-speaking audiences.
 - c. Hire dedicated staff to translate Extension educational resources as they are released in English.
 - d. Define and distribute specific strategies for all PSE educators to reach Latinx audiences.
 - e. Reach out to the Spanish language media.
2. College of Agricultural Sciences creates a marketing plan to meet the needs of Latinx producers and agricultural professionals (English and Spanish Speaking).
 - a. CAS Marketing and Communications works with LAN to identify Latinx producers and agricultural professionals.
 - b. LAN in conjunction with the PDP surveys the needs of Latinx producers and agricultural professionals.
 - c. CAS Marketing and Communications develop specific marketing materials to ensure that Latinx producers and agricultural professionals know about and are invited to PSE events.

Key Finding – 2

LCLs find it difficult to understand PSU’s organization and want greater transparency on the following topics: employee diversity, hiring processes, grants offered, funding structure, program success measurement, promotion of programs for Latinx audiences.

Action Item

1. Improve transparency and communication of how PSE works.
 - a. Create PSAs explaining PSE resources.

Key Finding – 3

There is a culture of fear that discourages Latinx communities from engaging with the broader PA community, including Penn State researchers and extension.

Action Items

1. Appoint a dedicated communications team that includes educators and faculty working with Latinx communities to establish trust.
 - a. Develop culturally appropriate communication and marketing strategies. This may include hiring a marketing company that specifically targets these communities.
 - b. Provide multicultural training to farm owners and supervisors, as well as Latinxs who are looking to better understand American culture.
 - c. Execute strategies that communicate the value of Latinx communities to Pennsylvanians.
2. Host an annual extension event that celebrates our relationship with Latinx communities.
3. Support and present at the annual Pennsylvania Latino Convention.

Key Finding - 4

There is a lack of understanding in the broader PSE and agricultural community about PSE diversity, equity, and inclusion responsibilities. Latinx community members, educators, and faculty face discrimination and indifference within PSE and in the broader community.

Action Items

1. Support diversity and inclusion related training for all staff.
 - a. Incentivize cultural competence training for all PSE employees.
 - b. Provide specific training to PSE county support staff, marketing/communications staff, and educators about the need for strategic engagement with Latinx communities.
 - c. Incentivize educators to interact with Latinx Pennsylvanians in Latinx communities.
2. Incorporate diversity and inclusion related training and emphasize the value of Latinx stakeholders in all extension events for the broader public.
 - a. Develop short modules that could be used in any extension event.
 - b. Ensure that these modules represent all Latinx stakeholders (i.e., not just farmworkers).
 - c. Share best practices among educators and faculty.

Key Finding – 5

Honor non-Spanish speaking Latinxs, whether they be those who only speak English or those who speak other languages, such as indigenous languages.

Action Item

1. Include this point in our multicultural training for PSE employees and include this as an instruction for the communications team.

Extension

Key Finding -1

There is a disconnection between Latinx's views of their own needs and the extension staff view of their needs.

Action Items

1. We need to create a culture that inspires and includes Latinx stakeholders without creating the feeling that extension staff is superior or that there is a social hierarchy.
 - a. PSE should be trained in participatory research and program planning with special emphasis on inclusion of Latinxs.
 - b. PSE should seek out the Latinx agricultural professionals to bridge these gaps.
 - c. PSE should identify and address barriers to the participation of the Latinxs from all sectors in Extension events.
2. Research conducted by members of PSE in the past 10 years should be used to inform communication and programming strategies.
 - a. Such research should be expanded to monitor the needs of all Latinx stakeholders.
 - b. PSE should engage the Latinx leaders in the PDP process.
 - c. Latinx leaders from all sectors should be invited to meet with PSE administrators annually.

Key finding – 2

There is a need for programs centered around Latinx community empowerment, including: youth opportunities, migrant education, workplace communication, and networking and career development for adults.

Action Items

1. Appoint focus groups to strategize support for these specific program goals.
2. Include Spanish proficiency as a criterion in PSE job postings, especially in counties with growing Latinx populations.
3. Create incentives for existing PSE staff to pursue Spanish proficiency.
4. Facilitate connections to Latinx youth through the development of Latinx 4-H clubs.
5. Advertise internships and scholarships to predominantly Latinx high schools and via 4-H.
6. Provide workplace soft skills training and networking opportunities for adults.

Key finding – 3

Latinx stakeholders are moving at increased rates into business ownership roles and need PSE support.

Action Items

1. Translate all beginner farmer resources, old and new, into Spanish.
2. PSE should appoint dedicated staff to work with the Latinx beginner farmers and entrepreneurs.
3. Assess the needs of established Latinx producers and agricultural professionals in order to provide programming for progression from entry to success.

Key finding – 4

Latinx immigrants with degrees in Agronomy find it difficult to navigate the US agricultural and

Visa systems and attain degree validation here; they often do not apply to PSE jobs due to these misunderstandings, despite being qualified.

Action Items

1. Streamline the degree validation process to include 1) counseling through immigration processes and 2) programming that fills gaps in education.
2. Work with HR to understand more generalized Agronomy positions in other countries and add language to job postings that would encourage immigrant applicants.
3. Initiate discussion for a University policy change to sponsor visas for Extension staff in order to capitalize on the international students we have trained.

Key finding – 5

Farm owners are hesitant to support worker training if it takes workers away from the farm.

Action Items

1. Better communicate to owners that worker training benefits everyone, improving efficiency and yield on the farm and helping Latinx workers with job advancement and satisfaction.
2. Establish incentives for farm owners to send their workers for training and professional development.
3. Increase the number of on-farm trainings.

Key finding – 6

Tasks that require attention for Latinx communities but are outside the scope of PSE include providing immigration information and guidance, affordable healthcare, quality childcare, afterschool programming, financial counseling, and affordable housing. Partnerships with existing organizations and colleges within PSU and in local communities will help to achieve these tasks.

Action Items

1. College of Agricultural Sciences leadership engages leadership from other colleges to develop a comprehensive program for serving Latinx communities in the commonwealth.
2. Strengthen communication with other PSU faculty and staff working in migrant education and community development.
3. Establish community partnerships to support Latinxs with issues outside the scope of extension.
4. Promote community programs and workshops that cover these topics to our Latinx community members.
5. List these community resources on the new Spanish landing page for PSE.
6. Encourage farmers to subsidize childcare in partnership with these community organizations.

Education

Key Finding -1

Latinx communities are not well-represented in STEM fields.

Action Items

1. Provide opportunities for Latinx youth to engage in STEM education through 4-H programming.
2. Facilitate faculty and educator engagement in K-12 outreach, especially to primarily Latinx high schools.
3. Form better connections between PSE and PSU campuses and their faculty who are already working with Latinx communities and leverage their current knowledge and experience.
4. Develop an internship program to train PSU students in Extension work.

Research

Key Finding -1

Effective outreach to Latinx communities and agricultural stakeholders to participate in research activities depends on developing culturally appropriate methods of investigation and communication.

Action Items

1. Support research on how communication flows within Latinx communities.
2. Enhance cultural competency training for PSE communications teams.
3. Explore media and methods of communication for effectively reaching Latinx communities.

Key finding – 2

Latinx students are underrepresented in agricultural careers.

Action Item

1. Conduct research on Latinx labor issues that impact retention in agricultural industries and should include and go beyond the issues of farmworker retention and include all sectors.
2. Introduce Latinx youth to agricultural careers through 4-H programming.

Key finding – 3

Research faculty may be unaware of community outreach initiatives that could expand the scope of their research.

Action Items

1. Provide information sessions for faculty to raise awareness of the LAN and increase collaboration with our network.
 - a. Enhance the quality of PI funding proposals by offering partnerships to achieve broader impacts.

Administration

Key Finding -1

Latinx stakeholder outreach has been supported by ad hoc efforts of dedicated PSE educators, but addressing the needs of the growing Latinx population will require a long-term institutional commitment.

Action Item

1. Establish a Latinx Extension and Research Center in the College of Agricultural Sciences.
 - a. Appoint a dedicated director (50% FTE) and executive committee.
 - b. Commit sustainable internal funding to launch this Center.
 - c. The director and executive committee will draft a proposal for a Center that includes a structure and mission statement.
 - d. The Center will aid the Marketing and Communications team in reaching PA Latinx communities.
 - e. The Center will seek external funding.
 - i. The Center will seek connections with other PSU colleges to build up a University-Wide Center.

Conclusions

Our goal is to position PSE to become the national leader and model in the development of educational programming directed to Latinx stakeholders. In order to capitalize on the momentum of the previous year's efforts and move toward meeting our goal, we suggest several actions be initiated or completed by May 1st, 2021: 1) Establish a Latinx Extension and Research Center with a dedicated director; 2) Establish a marketing and communications plan to effectively communicate with all Latinx stakeholders including both Spanish and English speakers; 3) Begin to hire more bilingual staff and educators; 4) Establish a cultural competency training program for PSE; 5) Establish a product development process (PDP) to serve all Latinx stakeholders; 6) Set a date for an annual meeting between Latinx leaders and CAS leadership.