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Wayne State University's GO-GIRL program piques girls' interest in math, science, engineering, technology

Wayne State University's *GO-GIRL (Gaining Options-Girls Investigate Real Life™)* program, designed to promote interest in *STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)* related careers and to boost mathematics skills and confidence in seventh-grade girls, is accepting applications for the winter 2011 semester.

The 10-week Saturday program, hosted by Wayne State's College of Education, will launch Jan. 22, 2011, and culminate with graduation ceremonies in April. GO-GIRL, which is held on Wayne State's main campus, is free and open to a limited number of seventh-grade female students.

Parents and students interested in the program should visit www.gogirls.wayne.edu/ and download the application forms.

The application deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2010.

Since its inception in 2002, GO-GIRL has helped more than 500 middle school girls from public and private schools throughout metro Detroit develop mathematical confidence, skills and conceptual understanding. The program was collaboratively developed by faculty from the Wayne State University College of Education and the University of Michigan Institute for Research on Women and Gender in response to the decline in mathematics interest and achievement among girls and minority youth during middle school.

Sally K. Roberts, a WSU assistant professor of mathematics and faculty advisor for GO-GIRL, said seventh grade is a pivotal time for girls in their experiences with and perceptions of math and science. "Our goal is to eliminate the stere-

otypes that discourage girls and young women from pursuing STEM-related education and careers," she said.

"Research over the years has shown that the achievement gap between boys and girls in math and science has decreased significantly. However, the notion that girls aren't as good in those subjects has persisted. GO-GIRL aims to eliminate these stereotypes and encourage girls' aspirations in these fields."

Pre-post comparisons indicate that GO-GIRL positively impacts participants' confidence in their ability to do well in mathematics. Roberts believes that the structure of the GO-GIRL program is an empowering experience to the young girls.

For more information about the GO-GIRL program, e-mail Sally Roberts at gogirl@wayne.edu.

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Win some, lose some: U-M expert provides reapportionment projections

ANN ARBOR, Nov. 2010: Before the U.S. Census Bureau releases its official state-level population counts to Congress on December 31, a University of Michigan demographer offers projections of likely state winners and losers.

But she also cautions that there are likely to be plenty of surprises.

According to *Lisa Neidert*, data services manager at the U-M Institute for Social Research (ISR) Population Studies Center, the most likely state winners—based on July 2009 population estimates from the Census Bureau—are Texas (3 seats), and Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Utah, and Washington, each likely to pick up one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Neidert expects state losers to be: *Ohio* (2 seats), and *Illinois*, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, *Michigan*, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania—each likely to lose one seat.

Neidert used an online apportionment calculator to project how changes in state populations would be reflected in the apportionment of House Seats for 2010 as compared to 2000. Her analyses also identify which states are most at risk for losing or gaining Congressional seats after factoring in recent population changes.

To identify surprise winners and losers, Neidert compares several measures of state population growth in 2008-

2009. “One obvious weakness in using pre-census population estimates is that states vary in their population growth, and the estimates leave out the last 9 months of growth, from July 1, 2009 through April 1, 2010,” says Neidert. However, this did not change the projections much, but that does not mean she expects her projections will be spot on. She says that the population estimates could be off a bit just like they were 10 years ago. And if these deviations vary by state, it can change the winners and losers in the apportionment battles.

Neidert identifies four factors that could affect population estimates. “The dramatic slowdown in both international and internal migration with the economic downturn and housing collapse could have a positive benefit to states in the Northeast and Midwest that have been donor states,” says Neidert. “And the impact on states in the Sunbelt or the West could be negative, with not as many in-migrants.”

The increase in home foreclosures could also affect the population counts of states with high foreclosure rates, such as Arizona, Nevada, Florida, and Michigan. “Doubled-up households—which have increased 11.6 percent between 2008 and 2009 according to the March Current Population Survey—may not have been counted as well in the self-enumerated Census,” says Neidert.

Algunos ganan, otros pierden: una experta de la UM hace pronósticos sobre los cambios en los distritos electorales

El impacto del debate de la inmigración indocumentada en el censo

ANN ARBOR: Antes de que la Oficina del Censo de Estados Unidos informe al Congreso sobre su cuenta oficial de la población en los Estados el 31 de diciembre, una demógrafo de la Universidad de Michigan ha hecho sus proyecciones de los probables ganadores y perdedores.

Pero ella también advierte que probablemente habrá muchas sorpresas.

Según *Lisa Neidert*, gerente de servicios de datos en el Centro de Estudios de Población del Instituto de Investigación Social (ISR por su sigla en inglés) de la UM, los estados que tienen más probabilidades de salir ganando—sobre la base de los cálculos de población de la Oficina del Censo en 2009—son Texas, con tres escaños adicionales en la Cámara de Representantes de EEUU, mientras que Arizona, Florida, Georgia, nevada, Carolina del Sur, Utah y Washington con un escaño más cada uno.

Neider calcula que los estados que perderán son *Ohio*, con dos escaños menos, e *Illinois*, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachussets, *Michigan*, New Jersey, New York y Pennsylvania con uno menos cada Estado.

Neider usó un calculadora de adjudicaciones, por Internet, para proyectar la forma en que los cambios en las poblaciones de los estados se reflejarán en la adjudicación de escaños en la Cámara para 2010, en comparación con 2000. Su análisis identificó asimismo cuáles son los estados que tienen más probabilidades de perder o ganar escaños en el Congreso después que se tomen en cuenta los cambios recientes en la población.

Para identificar a los ganadores y perdedores sorpresivos, Neider comparó varias mediciones del crecimiento de la población estatal en 2008 y 2009.

“Una debilidad obvia en el uso de cálculos de población previos al censo es

que los estados varían en su crecimiento de población y los cálculos dejan afuera los últimos nueve meses del crecimiento, desde el 1 de julio de 2009 al 1 de abril de 2010”, dijo Neidert. Sin embargo esto no modificó demasiado las proyecciones, aunque no significa que ella crea que sus proyecciones serán totalmente acertadas. Neidert dijo que los cálculos de población estarán un poco errados tal como lo estuvieron hace diez años. Y si estas desviaciones varían de Estado a Estado, puede haber cambios de ganadores y perdedores en las batallas de adjudicación.

Neidert identificó cuatro factores que podrían afectar los cálculos de población.

“La disminución sustancial en la migración, tanto internacional como interna, con la recesión económica y el colapso de la vivienda podrían tener un beneficio para los estados del noreste y el medio oeste que han sido los estados que han tenido emigración”, señaló Neidert. “Y el impacto en los estados del Sunbelt o del Oeste podría ser negativo ya que no ha habido tantos inmigrantes”.

Un tercer factor es la dificultad para calcular la población hispana, que es aproximadamente el 15 por ciento de la población de Estados Unidos, en parte debido a la población indocumentada.

“La polémica puramente política acerca de la inclusión o exclusión de los no ciudadanos en el Censo de 2010 y la nueva ley de inmigración de Arizona pueden haber afectado la tasa de participación hispana en el censo”, añadió Neidert. “Y esto podría perjudicar a cualquier Estado que tenga una elevada proporción de residentes hispanos”.

Finalmente Neidert cree que los efectos persistentes de desastres naturales, incluidos el huracán Katrina y el terremoto en Haití, podrían haber tenido un impacto en las proyecciones de población para Louisiana, y para New York y Florida donde se han asentado la mayoría de los refugiados haitianos.

“Hay que esperar lo inesperado” en la readjudicación de escaños del Congreso, concluyó Neidert.

Para acceder a la calculadora de adjudicación en Internet y las proyecciones visite.

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Senate losing a true champion of Latin America with retirement of Senator Dodd

By Alan Abrams, La Prensa Senior Correspondent

US Senator *Chris Dodd* (D-CT) has been one of the leading advocates in Congress for normalization of diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. However, his departure from the Senate at the end of the current lame duck session will remove from Capitol Hill the much-needed voice of a major champion of Latin America.

Dodd, who is relinquishing his powerful position as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps, and Global Narcotics Affairs, delivered an impassioned message to students on November 9, 2010 about the future of U.S. policy towards Latin America.

Speaking at Central Connecticut State University in Hartford, Dodd called for a fundamental shift in the United States' Latin American policy to reflect the region's changing economy and evolving democracy.

"Over the course of my service in the Senate, I've tried to play a role in shaping American policy towards our neighbors to the south," said Dodd. "The history of our relationship has too often been fraught with tension and mistrust, paternalism and exploitation. And although we've made progress, as I leave the Senate, it is long past time for a fundamental shift in our Latin America policy."

"[That's] because Latin America is not our backyard. It is our neighborhood. And when we focus exclusively on the challenges still faced by our neighbors — and the related dangers we, ourselves, face — we run the risk of missing out on the opportunities their progress has created," explained Dodd.

The son of Sen. *Thomas J. Dodd*, who represented Connecticut from 1959 to 1971, Chris Dodd served in the U.S. House of Representatives

from 1975 to 1981. He was elected to the Senate in 1980 and was Connecticut's longest-serving U.S. Senator. His successor, elected earlier this month, is fellow Democrat *Richard Blumenthal*.

Dodd's interest in Latin America was fostered during his time as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic from 1966 to 1968. For 25 years, he served as either Chairman or Vice Chairman of the U.S.-Mexico Interparliamentary Group, which brings together Mexican and US-American legislators on an annual basis to address matters critical to the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

Dodd critic of 5-decade US embargo on Cuba

Dodd led the Senate Central America Negotiations Group during the 1980s, which monitored the progress of the breakthrough Guatemala City accord. He also has been a longstanding critic of the United States embargo against Cuba and recently was an original co-sponsor of the *Freedom to Travel to Cuba Act*, which would lift travel restrictions on all US-Americans wishing to travel to Cuba.

As Dodd told his audience, "I returned from Cuba a few weeks ago, stunned to see that the country is finally making some of the critical changes in its own society that all of us, including the Cuban people, have wanted for so long. The Cuban Government recently announced that one-million Cubans have been let go from the Government payrolls and instead will be allowed to run their own businesses. With the help of Cardinal *Jaime Lucas Ortega Alamino* and the Spanish Government, political prisoners are being released."

"No, you don't have to approve of the way Cuba is run — and I certainly don't. Cuba clearly still has a long way to go to, and nobody is arguing to the

contrary. But the simple truth is that Cuba is changing.

"So the question I have to ask is, why aren't we?" asked Dodd.

Dodd had even more insightful questions to pose about the thorny US relationship with Cuba.

"Why don't we, Americans, have the courage to change 50 years of failed policy toward the island? Why are we stuck in an anachronistic policy that reflects the world of 1963 better than 2010? Why are we sitting on the sidelines when the very first signs of the change we all so desperately want, are finally beginning to happen? Why are we not taking critical steps that are in America's interest?"

"We must summon the courage and the wisdom to change course on Cuba."

"We must look forward," Dodd exhorted his audience.

US relationship with Venezuela

He had even more thoughts to share about the challenging US relationship with Venezuela, stating, "There is real cause for concern, we cannot bury our heads in the sand. We must address this challenge in a smart and sophisticated way."

"Earlier this year, the *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights* released a report that raised serious concerns regarding the further degradation of human rights in Venezuela. The situation is unacceptable. But this is not a case of the United States vs. Venezuela, but rather Venezuela vs. Democracy. Simply refusing to talk to Caracas won't do a thing to empower moderates and democratic advocates, loosen political restrictions, or encourage the Venezuelan people and its neighbors to push for change," stressed Dodd.

In his remarks, which have been edited for brevity by *La Prensa*, Dodd told the audience "I've been a Senator for a long time — but I've been passionate about Latin America for an even longer time... and, in that time, Latin America has undergone remarkable change — much of it positive."

"In a part of the world long defined by violent political instability and crushing poverty, we are seeing the development of a new middle class, the consolidation of democracy, the propagation of effective fiscal and social policies, and the rise of new global powers," said Dodd.

"Bloody civil unrest, authoritarian repression, widespread drug trafficking and violent organized crime — all these factors have held Latin America back."

"But the Latin America I finished visiting recently, in my last visit as a Senator, looks very different," Dodd said.

"First and foremost, democracy is becoming more widespread and more durable. In *Colombia* and *Chile*, citizens recently exercised their right to vote in successful, peaceful, fair elections. In *Brazil*, where President *Lula da Silva* has led so well, they have just elected their first female president [*Dilma Rousseff*], sending a strong message to a generation of Latin American women that they too are part of the region's future. President *Pepe Lobo* [*Porfirio Lobo Sosa*] of *Honduras* is helping to renew his country after their recent, outrageous coup," explained Dodd.

"Meanwhile, the Latin American economy, long defined as 'emerging,' has finally emerged. In the five years leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis, Latin American economies experienced growth rates of 5.5 percent, while keeping inflation in single digits. And when the crisis did hit, Latin America stood strong, weathering the crisis better than any other region in the world. This year, the Latin American economy will resume a strong 5-percent-or-higher growth rate."

"And while income inequality is still a significant issue, years of stable democracy, economic reform, well-regulated banking systems, increased trade and investment, and fiscal responsibility have paid off. Forty million Latin Americans were lifted out of poverty between 2002 and 2008. The region is developing a middle class that can stand on its own," said Dodd.

However, Dodd acknowledged much work



Chris Dodd

remains to be done. "Mexico and Colombia still struggle with crime and drug trafficking. Venezuela and Cuba remain examples of democracy denied. Haiti's desperate poverty is heart wrenching. Out of the spotlight, there are still developmental challenges: productivity is growing too slowly, saving is too low, and too much of the labor force remains in the informal economy. And even where the challenges can be more easily classified as simple growing pains, the tumultuous history of Latin America warns us that gains can be fragile."

"But that old metaphor — Latin America as the United

States' backyard — is indicative of the American habit of viewing the region solely in terms of problems to be solved, not opportunities to be celebrated. In turn, our neighbors too often see us as paternalistic and bossy instead of recognizing our commonality."

"What a shame," said Dodd, adding "because there is so much opportunity to be found in Latin America."

"After all, we [the United States] are Number Two in the world [in terms of] Spanish speakers. Our enormous and influential Latin community has brought cultural and familiarities to the forefront along with our geographical proximity. And not only do we share a common colonial history, there's reason to believe that our paths forward may converge, as well."

"We want new markets for our exports. Latin America's growing industrial economy and newly-emerged middle class represent just that."

"We want to see democratic values prosper around the world. Latin America can be an important foothold for freedom."

"We want a world in which regional and global powers adhere to principles of democracy and capitalism. Latin America's most powerful country, *Brazil*, can be an effective regional and global force on these issues, leading by example and demonstrating that economic growth and political freedom can rise together. *Brazil* is a natural ally and partner of the United States, because like us, it is a large and diverse democracy, with a dynamic economy. Partnering with *Brazil* will not mean convincing its leaders to do what is in our interests alone; instead, it will mean working collectively towards a common agenda that will benefit *Brazilians* and Americans alike," said Dodd.

"That's why I've urged our government to continue its policy of encouraging the social and economic development that has brought Latin America so far along... Meanwhile, to strengthen our economic ties, I urge Congress to pass the *Colombia* and *Panama* free trade agreements, and I hope the President will continue to seek further opportunities to bolster our trade relationship and create mutually beneficially economic partnerships," added Dodd.

"Just as, for too long, America has thought of Latin America as our backyard instead of our neighborhood, too many Americans — even those with a strong interest in foreign policy — see this particular region as minor, compared to Europe or Asia or the Middle East."

"It's time to start majoring in Latin America," said Dodd.

"Students who want to pick up another language are increasingly turning to French or Chinese — I encourage you to learn Spanish. Traveling abroad? Lots of Americans spend a semester in London or Germany — why not spend yours in Quito or Santiago? In the market for a good foreign investment? Look to *Brazil*. A fan of *Al Jazeera* or the *Guardian*? Why not read *Argentina's Clarin*, the largest Spanish language newspaper in the world?"

"The strength of our ties with Latin America comes not from political calculation or economic self-interest, but from the familial and cultural influence of the region on our own communities. And it is in our communities that we can begin to shift the paradigm of our relationship with our neighbors."

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