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UMass Boston's Gastón Institute Releases Study on Latino Educational Engagement and Achievement in Massachusetts

Boston, Mass.— The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Public Policy and Community Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston has completed an outcomes and engagement report on the educational achievement of Latino students in Massachusetts.

The report, titled "The Status of Latino Education in Massachusetts," uses data from the Massachusetts Department of Education to report on key outcome indicators, including the trends in the results for Latino students in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) from 2001-2006. It finds that, although some gains have been made in achievement, the engagement of Latino students is tenuous, at best, and is characterized by low attendance rates, high dropout rates, and the lowest graduation rate of any group in the state. This state-level report is the third in a series of reports published by the Institute on Latino educational outcomes in Massachusetts.

"Though the results are still very depressed when compared to those of other groups, there have been slight improvements in MCAS results and even a slight narrowing of the achievement gap between Latino and other students," said Dr. Miren Uriarte, author of the report and the Director of the Gastón Institute. "The more intractable problem seems to be the failure of engaging Latino students in the educational enterprise, as is shown by their high dropout rates and low graduation rates for Latino students in Massachusetts."

Nicole Lavan, a PhD Candidate in Public Policy at the McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies and co-author of the report, adds, "On nearly all measures of educational outcomes, Latino students have the lowest outcomes. So, the education of Latino students is at a crucial crossroads, these outcomes will either become further entrenched or more significant improvements can begin."

The Institute will be hosting a press conference on March 19, 2008, the day of the report release at the Statehouse, Room 437 at 9:15 a.m. Authors will be present to discuss with reporters and other media representatives highlights from the report, and its significance to the Latino condition in Massachusetts. *To RSVP your attendance or to schedule an interview with the authors, please email melissa.colon@umb.edu or call 617.287.5773.* Copies of the study are available upon request.





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About the Gastón Institute

The Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy was established in 1989 at the University of Massachusetts Boston by the Massachusetts State Legislature at the behest of Latino community leaders and scholars in response to a need for improved understanding of the Latino experience in the Commonwealth. The mission of the Gastón Institute is to inform policy makers about issues vital to the state's growing Latino community and to provide this community with the information and analysis necessary for effective participation in public policy development. The Institute honors the memory of Mauricio Gastón, a Cuban native and a long-time community activist in Boston who taught in the Community Planning Center at UMass Boston's College of Public and Community Service from 1980 to the time of his death in 1986. For more information on the Gaston Institute, go to www.gaston.umb.edu.

About UMass Boston

The University of Massachusetts Boston prides itself on providing challenging teaching, distinguished research, and extensive public service to Boston and the Commonwealth. UMass Boston offers undergraduate and graduate study to more than 13,400 students in more than 150 fields. UMass Boston and the four other University of Massachusetts campuses combine to attract \$400 million in research and development investment annually and generate \$4 billion in yearly economic activity for the Commonwealth. For more information, please see www.umb.edu.

