

EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS
PROGRAM ON IMMIGRATION AND DEMOCRACY

Summary of Accomplishments, 2007-2008

Background Information

Building on a young program at Rutgers' Eagleton Institute of Politics that brings together some 40 immigration scholars representing a wide variety of academic disciplines and research approaches, Eagleton staff began conversations about establishing a Center on Immigration and Democracy in early 2006. During that same year, Eagleton began a monthly luncheon roundtable on immigration and organized several public education activities focusing on the impact of immigration on American society. In late 2006, Eagleton was approached by the New Jersey Immigration Policy Network about the possibility of harnessing the University's expertise and research capability to the myriad public policy challenges confronting New Jersey immigrants and receiving communities. In early 2007, Eagleton presented the concept of an immigration center for consideration as one of the development priorities for the upcoming Rutgers campaign, and immigration was designated an area of priority concern in the University's draft campaign brochure.

During this period of gestation for the center, the administration of Governor Jon Corzine began grappling with the issue of immigration, culminating in the issuance of an executive order by Governor Jon Corzine in August of 2007 creating a 27-member "Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigrant Policy" to examine ways to improve New Jersey's effectiveness in integrating its growing immigrant population. New Jersey became only the second state in the nation to initiate a comprehensive process to facilitate immigrant integration, thereby positioning the state to function as an important laboratory for new service paradigms and civic participation models and to provide timely and important leadership to the rest of the country. The formation of the panel, and the groundswell of interest in local immigrant integration issues, reflected in the establishment of immigrant integration projects by both the National League of Cities and the National Governor's Association, attest to the salience of immigration as a state and local public policy issue.

Since the establishment of the Panel, Eagleton has worked with the State of New Jersey to support and facilitate its work. The fruits of this partnership have demonstrated the value and potential of the proposed center as a policy-oriented research hub specializing in the state and local impacts of migration. Eagleton has also undertaken a strategic planning process to clarify the goals and objectives of the Center in the years to come. This report summarizes the major accomplishments of the Program on Immigration and Democracy during the period from September, 2007, through December, 2008.

Support for the Work of the New Jersey Blue Ribbon Panel on Immigrant Policy

Through the participation of Rutgers faculty, staff, and students, Eagleton has made a major contribution to the success of the Blue Ribbon Panel. One of Eagleton's faculty associates, Janice Fine of the School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) served as a member of the Panel and was Eagleton's official liaison with it. As a member of the Panel's Labor and Workforce Development Committee, Dr. Fine prepared several briefs for the Committee and helped to write the committee's final report. She was also instrumental in arranging a visit and presentation by Prof. David Weil of Boston University, a national leader in developing new approaches to labor law enforcement in industries employing large numbers of immigrants. Dr. Weil's presentation, cosponsored by the Blue Ribbon Panel and SMLR, provided a blueprint for internal reform within the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Dr. Fine is currently seeing funding to conduct an in-depth study of current enforcement practices and outcomes within the Department.

Another Eagleton Faculty Associate, Dr. Christine Thurlow Brenner of the School of Public Policy and Administration, Rutgers (Camden), and a national expert in immigrant integration strategies in new Latino destinations in the United States, also made a major contribution to the work of the Panel. Dr. Brenner authored the initial report for the State and Local Government Subcommittee, sharing information gleaned from her many field trips around the country. She also served as faculty moderator for a local government symposium hosted by Eagleton (see below). Finally, she enabled the students in her class entitled, "Colloquium on U.S. Immigration Policy" to undertake research on a range of issue of interest to the Panel, including workplace literacy, housing, and disaster preparedness, and to report the results of their research to the Panel at a special meeting on December 9, 2008.

The Program's first Project Director and Visiting Associate, Dr. Nicholas V. Montalto, also played a key role in the work of the Panel. He chaired a five-member Panel task force convened for the purpose of developing recommendations pertaining to the establishment of a state Office of Immigrant Affairs. Both Christine Brenner and Janice Fine also served on this body. After reviewing and analyzing the structural implications of the reports filed by the four panel subcommittees, as well as input from Task Force members, Dr. Montalto authored a consensus recommendation and report, which was largely adopted by the full panel at its November 2008 meeting. He also provided suggestions to the state regarding the possible establishment of a funders collaborative in New Jersey, modeled on similar initiatives elsewhere in the country.

The Blue Ribbon Panel also relied extensively on Eagleton graduate fellows who undertook specific assignments on behalf of the panel. Foremost among these students were: Sara Angevine, Ph.D. student in Political Science, and Josh Applebaum, Masters of Public Policy student at the Bloustein School. Ms. Angevine conducted research on state initiatives to promote immigrant integration, and Mr. Applebaum produced a series of

briefing papers on various issues under examination by the Panel, including the sensitive questions of driving privileges and in-state tuition for undocumented immigrants.

Finally, Rutgers made its facilities available to the Panel for several of its meetings. The first public hearing conducted by the Panel on December 10, 2007, was held in the SMLR auditorium. SMLR also arranged a March 13, 2008, videoconference between Blue Ribbon Panel members and officials in the State of Illinois, who have carried out a national demonstration project in the field of immigrant policy.

Reaching Out to Non-Rutgers Experts

In its effort to develop comprehensive policy recommendations in a wide range of policy areas, the Blue Ribbon Panel turned to Eagleton to identify other scholars and policy experts available to provide input into its deliberations. One area of special interest was immigrant adult education. At the request of the project director, the president of the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning, Mr. Enrico Prata, submitted oral and written testimony to the panel at its third public hearing at New Jersey City University on June 11, 2008. Eagleton also recruited Prof. Erik Jacobson of Montclair State University, an adult literacy specialist who has done extensive work on immigrant issues, to help develop and write the panel's policy recommendations in this area. Although Eagleton will draw on the expertise of the Rutgers community whenever appropriate, we also recognize the value of casting a wider net in particular circumstances.

Symposia Series

A major initiative of the Program during 2008 was to organize and convene a series of three symposia focusing on model policy and practices for immigrant integration. The following topics were covered in this series:

- Local Government and Immigrant Integration: Challenges and Opportunities (April 29, 2008)
- State Government and Immigrant Integration: Goals, Models and Programs (June 9, 2008)
- Immigrant Civic Participation: A Challenge for New Jersey and the Nation (October 20, 2008)

Each program brought together a mix of researchers, public officials, practitioners, and immigrant community representatives. Thirty-three presenters were recruited for the three programs, with 15 drawn from outside the State of New Jersey, including the former mayor of Indianapolis, the Director of the Illinois Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Affairs, program officers from the Colorado Trust and The Ford Foundation, and the director of the Coro Immigrant Civic Leadership Program. Each symposium produced summary reports and recommendations which were delivered to the Blue Ribbon Panel and posted on the Eagleton web site.

Commissioning Studies

During the year, Eagleton conceptualized and began the implementation of a series of policy studies directly related to the work and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel. Although the State's budget did not permit any direct investments in Rutgers projects, Eagleton was instrumental in identifying a private funder to underwrite the costs of an economic study of immigration in New Jersey undertaken by professors Ira Gang and Anne Piehl in the Rutgers Economic Department. Commissioned at the express request of the Blue Ribbon Panel, this study documents the centrality of immigrants to New Jersey's labor force. With the assistance of Anastasia Mann, Ph.D., who joined the Program on Immigration and Democracy in the fall of 2008 as an Associate, Eagleton will release the economic impact study at a press conference at the state house during mid-December 2008.

Eagleton expects that the final report of the Blue Ribbon Panel will endorse the need for further studies related to the long-term goals of the Corzine executive order. As part of our strategic planning process (see below), Eagleton has identified seven immigration-related research domains for potential future exploration: civic participation, economic integration, education policy, political incorporation, human service development, and social cohesion/intergroup relations.

Immigration Roundtable

The establishment of the Eagleton faculty roundtable on immigration two years ago was an important milestone in the development of the proposed immigration center -- demonstrating the potential of cross-disciplinary dialogue and community-building on immigrant research and policy issues. During the past year, under the leadership of Professors Jane Junn and Daniel Tichenor of the Political Science Department, the roundtable continued its series of monthly meetings with research presentations on such topics as the immigration marches of 2006, the role of interest groups in state-level immigrant policy development, media coverage of immigration reform efforts, and the role of labor unions in the immigrant rights movement.

Completion of a Vision Statement and Strategic Analysis

Perhaps, the most important development of the year was the completion of a vision statement and strategic analysis for the new center. Dr. Nicholas V. Montalto led the planning effort with support from a leadership team consisting of Jane Junn, Janice Fine, and John Weingart. One element of the planning process was an internal inventory of Rutgers faculty and staff engaged in immigration-related research. More than 90 experts appeared on the final list, including faculty from the fields of anthropology, business, communications, criminal justice, economics, education, geography, history, journalism, Latino studies, law, political science, public health, social work, sociology, and women's studies. Dr. Montalto also conducted in-depth interviews with 19 Rutgers faculty, staff, or administrators, drawn from 16 different departments, schools, and centers; and all

possessing a strong interest in immigration as a research and/or policy area. Among issues discussed in these interviews were the need for a multi-disciplinary immigration research center at Rutgers, obstacles and factors conducive to its development, and the structure that such a center would take. He also arranged interviews with eight key informants from outside the University, including immigrant community leaders, funders, and public officials. In addition, he performed an environmental scan of the 40 leading university-based immigration research centers or think tanks in the United States, Canada, Australia, and the European Union, for the purpose of understanding how Rutgers might complement existing policy-oriented research work and utilize its resources to best advantage. As the year ended, Eagleton was seeking external support to implement recommendations in the report.