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**Hispanic Population Proposal**

**Executive Summary**

The U.S. Census Bureau reports, as of July 2021, the Hispanic population in the U.S. is an estimated 62.6 million people or 18.9% of the U.S. population. This is the nation's largest racial or ethnic minority, though there are only 13 states with a Hispanic population of at least 1 million. Arkansas is ranked 33rd in states with the highest Hispanic population, with an estimated 247,640 people in 2022.

While Hispanics only make up about 9% of Arkansas’s population, that number is slowly growing. A report published in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette states that much of the Hispanic population is comprised of second-generation families. Parents of these families migrated to the area due to jobs in poultry plants in the 1990s. Tyson Foods is a key employer in this. Located in Benton County, Tyson Foods’ employee base is 28.2% Hispanic in 2022, according to GlobalData. Continuing the trend of their families working in poultry plants is an option many are taking. However, this tradition can be broken.

The most common racial group in journalism is the White or Caucasian population. In a time where representation is valued, encouraging and uplifting other ethnic groups into journalistic fields is important. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanic representation in this field is a mere 12.6%. It is important that children see journalists that are from similar backgrounds to them. This can create a new sense of understanding and perspective for these children and spark a desire to step into new career paths. The School of Journalism and Strategic Media, SJSM, offers The Lemke Journalism Project, a newspaper program for high school students interested in writing about diverse issues. The funding comes from Tysons Food and hit a peak performance in 2015, with the highest involvement from students to date. Capitalizing on this program and spreading awareness would be beneficial.

**Situation Analysis**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Hispanic population in Benton County is an estimated 45,827 people or 17.8%. This number makes Hispanics the second largest ethnic group in the county; however, the high population is not reflected in the enrollment of Hispanic students in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media (SJSM) at the University of Arkansas. The university saw its lowest number of Hispanic students from Benton County in the SJSM in 2011, with just four students. In 2019 that number rose to 17 and then fell to six in 2022. The interest and awareness about the SJSM appear to be small for the Hispanics in Benton County. This community sees very little representation within the SJSM, with population sizes in the single digits compared to the 45,827 in Benton County.

**Objectives**

This campaign aims to increase the number of Hispanic students from Benton County in the SJSM by introducing them to journalism at a younger age, along with all the opportunities the SJSM has to offer. We aim to increase the number of Hispanic Students from Benton County enrolled in the SJSM by 10% by August 2026. To do this, exposure to the SJSM program must begin in high schools around Benton County.

**Target Audience**

Creating an interest in strategic media and journalism should start at a young age, targeting middle and high school students. Journalism can be more than just reporting news and the target audience should be taught this. Involvement in clubs or classes can spark an interest in students they didn’t know existed.

**Strategies and Tactics**

To achieve the campaign's objective, involvement in Benton County high schools must begin. Attending college fairs is a good start. Following this, visiting schools and speaking at clubs like yearbook or other creative areas would be beneficial. Such meetings can happen as often as possible, depending on school availability. University yearbook staff will visit clubs/classes interested in knowing more about the SJSM during class/club meeting times. Speaking at assemblies is also possible. SJSM students can bring equipment such as cameras and microphones to demonstrate to the students what the SJSM has to offer. Branching out to students not already involved in journalism is most important. The SJSM could offer to film games, cover stories and create interesting content like “first day of school” videos for schools in Benton County. Doing this would boost exposure for the SJSM while also creating an opportunity for current SJSM students to create content for community members. Videos will be shared on the respective school's social media and website. These videos can also be attached to digital school newsletters.

The Lemke Journalism Project mentioned earlier is a program that should be expanded on. Creating a space for students to write about diversity is a good start; however, there is more to journalism for students than just diversity topics. Creating areas for sports reporting, arts, entertainment, fashion and other topics would widen the reach of students. With Tyson Foods being the main source of funding for the program, the program could offer scholarships for Hispanic families working for the company.

**Timetable**

The campaign should begin toward the end of summer, reaching out to schools offering project opportunities. This would need to begin in August 2023 and continue throughout the semester until December 2023. At this time, the campaign should come together and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the projects. In addition, college fairs will be held during the second semester, January to May 2024. Sending representatives to these fairs should occur.

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the Lemke Journalism Project should be active. Participation will assumingly be low toward the beginning. Reconnecting after the first semester and looking at the involvement can help the campaign adjust and address issues for a successful second semester.

**Evaluation**

To evaluate the campaign's success, conducting a census-like survey will measure the Hispanic population in the SJSM, specifically, the Hispanic population from Benton County. It will ask about their knowledge and involvement with journalistic areas such as yearbook, film, photography, writing and journalism classes. This survey should be conducted at the beginning of the 2023 school year. Conducting an end of year survey will track the campaign progress with exposure to Hispanic students in the SJSM from Benton County.