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Goizueta Distinguished Chair of Education Named Center Director

April 24, 2014

Georgia Southern University's College of Education recently named Alejandro Gallard, Ph.D., professor and Goizueta Distinguished Chair of Education, as the director of the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal (GCER) whose mission is to support research and encourage collaborative work directed at schools serving rural areas, especially those with large non-English speaking populations.

Gallard joined Georgia Southern University in fall 2013 as the Goizueta Distinguished Chair of Education. Since then, he has taken the lead in developing collaborative initiatives within the University and worked to develop newly funded projects that support improvement in education settings particularly for the Hispanic/Latino community in rural Georgia.

"GCER has always focused on how we as educators, researchers and teacher educators can address the differing educational issues and needs of rural and small town schools," said Thomas R. Koballa, Jr., Ph.D., dean of the College of Education. "It's not just about the lack of resources in many rural areas," Koballa said, although he said that is an issue. "We need to address the changing nature of these areas, the growing non-English speaking populations and the underrepresentation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematical fields of all K-12 students in rural areas. Dr. Gallard's appointment is a clear signal that the needs of rural Georgia are a priority here," Koballa said.

"Much of the current school renewal and reform research and efforts have been conducted at larger universities that are embedded within large urban centers," Gallard explained. "I think we need to renew our efforts in understanding education in rural areas so that Georgians who live in these areas can develop the full potential to contribute to the economic welfare of Georgia," he said.

Gallard said that rural Georgia is changing from primarily an agricultural economy to one that is inclusive of large industries. For example, Gallard said that high tech businesses such as Gulfstream and Mitsubishi have moved into Pooler. In Effingham County, there is the EFACEC Group, one of the world's leading manufacturers of power substations and a leader in the power generation industry and, when completed, Medient Studios, an international film company, will be the largest movie studio in the United States. Bulloch County is home to Briggs and Stratton.

"These companies need a pool of local residents to fill their high tech and non-high tech labor force," he said. "Given this demand for employees with a variety of skills, and an increasing potential for future development, it is critical to help rural school districts be successful with all of their students," Gallard continued.

"As state leaders continue to call for higher performance by all student populations, the need for GCER is evident. I'm confident that Dr. Gallard will bring much needed attention to the special concerns of Georgia's rural schools, Koballa said.



Dr. Alejandro Gallard, Goizuetta Distinguished Chair in Education, was named director of the Georgia Center for Educational Renewal.